

Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period

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Foreword

This volume evolved out of the papers presented and the conversations conducted at a workshop organized by the Faculties of Catholic Theology and Protestant Theology at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) Munich on the one hand and the Dept. of History and Classics and the Program of Religious Studies at the University of Alberta on the other. This workshop, which is part and parcel of a large, multi-year collaboration project involving the University of Alberta and LMU Munich, was held on May 7–11, 2012 in Edmonton. It involved mainly, but not only, scholars in other institutions in Canada and the EU. The papers vividly discussed in this workshop evolved into the revised versions included in this volume. The editors asked a few other colleagues to write chapters to complement, in terms of scope, those emerging from the volume and the result is this present collection.

The editors wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Office of the Vice-President International at the University of Alberta, the Faculty of Arts, the Dept. of History and Classics and the Religious Studies Interdisciplinary Program for the financial and in kind support that they provided for the workshop. Ms. Melanie Marvin (History and Classics, Univ. of Alberta) was the key person for all administrative matters. The editors would like also to acknowledge the volunteer graduate students who took care of some of the practicalities of holding such a workshop. Without their assistance, neither the workshop nor this volume would have seen the light of day.

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Abbreviations

AASF	<i>Annales Acadmiae scientiarum fennicae</i>
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
ABC	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . A. K. Grayson. TCS 5. Locus Valley, New York, 1975
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ABG	<i>Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte</i>
ABL	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters Belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum</i> . Edited by R. F. Harper. 14 vols. Chicago, 1892–1914
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</i>
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3d ed. Princeton, 1969
ANES	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries
ARAB	<i>Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia</i> . Daniel David Luckenbill. 2 vols. Chicago, 1926–1927
ArBib	<i>The Aramaic Bible</i>
ArOr	<i>Archiv Orientální</i>
ARRIM	<i>Annual Review of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia</i>
ASORDS	American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBB	<i>Bulletin de bibliographie biblique</i>

BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BC	Biblischer Kommentar über das Alte Testament
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum
<i>BeO</i>	<i>Bibbia e oriente</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>BevT</i>	<i>Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie</i>
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BiSe	Biblical Interpretation Series
BiSe	The Biblical Seminar
<i>BK</i>	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BTZ</i>	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAR	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
<i>CahRB</i>	<i>Cahiers de la Revue biblique</i>
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CC	Continental Commentaries
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by W. W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden, 1997–2002
CRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
<i>DCH</i>	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by D. J. A. Clines. Sheffield, 1993–
<i>DDD</i>	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden, 1995
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert

EDSS	<i>The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> . Edited by L. H. Schiffman and J. C. Vanderkam; 2 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
ET	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
ESI	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i>
EstBib	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
ETR	Etudes théologiques et religieuses
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
HA	Hadashot Arkheologiyot
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HCOT	<i>Historical commentary on the Old Testament Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSAT	<i>Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch and A. Bertholet. 4th ed. Tübingen, 1922–1923
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum AT
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>

JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JCTCRS	<i>Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNWSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JPSTC	JPS Torah Commentary
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSem	<i>Journal of Semitics</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . H. Donner and W. Röllig. 2d ed. Wiesbaden, 1966–1969
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KBL	Koehler, L., and W. Baumgartner, <i>Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros</i> . 2d ed. Leiden, 1958
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KK	<i>KatorikkuKenkyu</i>
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
MARI	<i>Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires</i>
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
MorS	<i>Moreshet series</i>
MthA	<i>Münsteraner theologische Abhandlungen</i>
MTSR	<i>Method and Theory in the Study of Religion</i>
NABU	<i>Nouvelles assyriologiques breves et utilitaires</i>
NCBC	<i>The New Century Bible Commentary</i>
NEAEHL	<i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . Edited by E. Stern. 4 vols. Jerusalem, 1993
NEB	Die Neue Echter-Bibel
NGTT	<i>Nederduitse gereformeerde theologiese tydskrif</i>
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NRTh	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NSKAT	<i>Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament</i>
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications

OLP	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica</i>
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
Or	<i>Orientalia</i> (NS)
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies
OtSt	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Greco-Roman World
RGTC	Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RIMB	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods
RIME	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods
RINAP	Royal inscriptions of the neo-Assyrian period
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> . Edited by Erich Ebeling et al. Berlin, 1928–
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SB	<i>Studia Biblica</i>
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and its literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SBLWGRW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman world
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
SHCANE	Studies in the History and the Culture of the Ancient Near East
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SO FascSup	Symbolae Osloenses Fasciculus Suppletionis
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
SSN	<i>Studia Semitica Neerlandica</i>
STAR	Studies in Theology and Religion

STDJ	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>
StOr	Studies in Oriental Religions
StudOr	<i>Studia orientalia</i>
SubBi	Subsidia biblica
SWBA	Social World of Biblical Antiquity
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TAD	B. Porten and A. Yardeni, Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt (Jerusalem: Hebrew University)
TB	Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–
ThLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
ThSt	<i>Theologische Studien</i>
ThWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Stuttgart, 1970–
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Edited by G. Krause and G. Müller. Berlin, 1977–
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publication
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
VWGT	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WÄS	<i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> . A. Erman and H. Grapow. 5 vols. Berlin, 1926–1931. Reprint, 1963.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAH	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebräistik</i>
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>

ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZBK	<i>Zürcher Bibelkommentare</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

CHRISTOPH LEVIN

I

Water is the foundation for all life on earth. That is why a sufficient supply of water is one of the great themes for humanity today. What is now becoming an urgent problem because of ecological changes and the rapid growth of the world's population, was already one of the most important subjects of concern in the civilizations of the ancient world. This was particularly true in the semi-arid climate of the biblical lands. The Bible reflects this situation extensively, and in many different ways.

In the book of Genesis, the creation of the world begins with water, and in contrary ways. In the second, older creation account, the world before creation is described as completely dry (Gen 2:5). The first, later creation account, on the other hand, imagines the status quo before creation as being a watery chaos (Gen 1:2). In both cases water is the fundamental theme.

The Bible's double beginning shows that the experience of water is ambivalent from the very outset. On the one hand, enough available and controllable water for the lives of human beings and beasts is the precondition for an ordered world. The cosmos is characterized by a secure provision of water. On the other hand, water can become an extremely threatening enemy. Water is also the epitome of chaos.

The following collection of studies gives an impression of the variety which is associated with the theme of water. It is a topic which enduringly influenced the biblical literature of the Persian and Hellenistic periods. And here very varying viewpoints are important. The title *Thinking of Water* shows that it is not primarily a question of water as such, but rather of the effect of water in its manifold forms and appearances on the *awareness* of men and women, and of the degree to which it determined not only real living conditions but the intellectual and spiritual culture as well.

The restriction to the Persian and Hellenistic period is guided by practical considerations. These are the eras in which biblical literature took on the form in which it has come down to us today, and in which

a great part of the extant text also came into being. In the biblical writings this era offers us the best foundational sources – even though the dating of these sources individually and their numerous stages of development are uncertain and will remain so. Since at this time the limits of the canon were not yet defined, it is also useful to draw on the extra-canonical literature as well, in this case the Enochic literature and the Qumran writings.

We encounter water in the biblical and parabiblical literature both as a reality and as a metaphor. It appears in widely varied forms. There are the springs, such as the Gihon, which did not only guarantee Jerusalem's water supply but where Solomon is said to have been elevated as king (1 Kgs 1:38), and the famous source that waters paradise (Gen 2:6). There are cisterns, such as the ones into which Joseph (Gen 37:24) and Jeremiah (Jer 38:6) were thrown. There are brooks, such as the brook Cherith, on whose banks Elijah was fed by ravens (1 Kgs 17:5), or the Kishon, in which the opponents of Barak and Elijah found their end (Judg 5:21; 1 Kgs 18:40), and the Jabbok, at whose ford Jacob wrestled with God (Gen 32:23). There are the rivers, such as the Jordan, the Euphrates, the Nile and the rivers of paradise (Gen 2:10–14). There are the seas: the Mediterranean (Jonah 1 and frequently), the Reed Sea (Exod 14 and frequently) and the mythical primal ocean, which breaks in over the world of the living in the form of the Flood, and brings back chaos (Gen 6–8).

As a matter of course, the powerful symbolic value of water found expression in the system of religious symbols, to the point when water itself was ascribed divine attributes. Just as the sea and the rivers took on mythical form in the person of the sea god (cf. Ps 93 and frequently), the God YHWH too can be experienced as "the fountain of life" (Ps 36:10). And here Israel was not alone but was linked with its cultural and religious environment in manifold ways.

II

Ehud Ben Zvi, "Thinking of Water in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Judah: An Exploration," gives a survey of the symbolic value which water took on in the discourse of the Jewish community. The examples of this from the authoritative repertoire are extremely numerous. They include cases in which symbolic value is associated with particular "waters," as the occasion for historical reminiscence: rivers such as the Jordan, the rivers in Eden, the Euphrates and the Nile, seas such as the Reed Sea, or the Mediterranean, as well as the Flood in primeval times.

There are remembrances which are bound up with sources, wells, and pools as the stage for events. Whereas all these motifs do not necessarily involve the water itself, water can itself be a metaphor. "YHWH is water" embraces the blessing but also the threatening features of the experience of God in an impressive way. Fire and light are comparable metaphors. Jerusalem can be described as "fountain of water" towards which the nations for their part "stream" in order to acquire water, i.e., wisdom. In Isa 55:10–11 YHWH's word as the subject of teaching is equated with the rain and snow that make the earth fertile. In Isa 11:9 knowledge of YHWH is compared with the water of the sea. According to Amos 5:24, justice and righteousness are to "flow." In sum, Ben Zvi shows that "water" served as a central semantic playground that allowed the community to explore, express, formulate, reformulate and communicate in intelligible ways, concepts that would have been difficult for them to express or even explore in other manners. Thinking of (and through the concept of) water facilitated thinking about a plethora of various matters that were central to the community

Martti Nissinen, "Sacred Springs and Liminal Rivers: Water and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean," discusses the significance of water for prophecy. In the literary testimonies of prophecy which have been preserved, water is mentioned as an entity with a significance of its own. It also plays a part in the outward circumstances in which prophetic predictions were made and passed on. Prophets underwent ritual purifications. In the sphere of Greek civilization, oracles were for preference situated at springs. Mesopotamian Mari is evidence that water was important in mantic praxis. In Assyrian prophecies, the river plays a part as a site for the ordeal, and prophets could promise divine protection at the crossing of the river (cf. Isa 43:2). In Israel, God himself can be termed the source of living water (Jer 17:13; Ps 36:10).

In Mesopotamian sources, the generous gift of water as the foundation for the country's wellbeing is associated with the monarchy, as *Stéphanie Anthonioz* shows in "Water(s) of Abundance in the Ancient Near East and in Hebrew Bible Texts: A Sign of Kingship." In the same way that in the creation myths the gods established life through the gift of water, it is the king's task to guarantee a constant water supply. He is responsible to the gods for the country's irrigation. This idea, which originates in the Mesopotamian irrigation culture, came from there to the west, as we see from the Bible and other sources from Israel's neighbouring cultures. In Judah the idea certainly changed in a remarkable way towards the end of the monarchy: since there was no longer a king, it was YHWH himself who as divine king saw to the irri-

gation of the country. The concepts of order which in the earlier period were associated with the king, are now bound up with the Torah.

In "The Nile in Biblical Memory," *Diana Edelman* takes the Nile as an example showing that an individual body of water could acquire remarkable significance, and one that was, in addition, outside the country of Israel. For the ancient world, the Nile, together with the Euphrates and the Tigris, was the most impressive river of all, a natural wonder without parallel. Here what is in question is not the biblical information as such; Edelman asks rather about the associations which came to the fore when Jewish readers read the texts during the Hellenistic period (332–146 BCE) and understood it as a part of a past which determined their own group identity. In the sense of political history, the Nile (like the Pharaoh) stands for Egypt *per se*, generally as a hostile power (Jeremiah 46; Ezekiel 29; and frequently). Topographically, for the Jewish communist in the Persian era the Nile constituted an external frontier that was both real and symbolic. This has an individual dimension, when it is the Nile into which the little Israelite boys are to supposed to be thrown according to Exodus 1, and from which Moses is saved according to Exodus 2. It has a cosmic dimension, when the rise of the Nile is associated with the floods of chaos which threaten the cultivated land (Amos 9:5). It has a topographical dimension, which is shown particularly clearly through the promise in Gen 15:18, where the borders of the promised land are determined by the Nile and the Euphrates. At the same time, this border can still include the land along the banks of the Nile and hence the Egyptian diaspora.

Kåre Berge, in "Polluted, Bitter, and Sweet Water as a Matter of Ethnic Identity-Formation in Persian Yehud," considers the tradition about the exodus from Egypt and the wanderings through the wilderness, showing how in the Persian era these texts helped to develop a Jewish identity. He takes up Mary K. Wakeman's interpretation of the story about the miracle at the sea, which stresses that the motif of the fight against chaos also underlies the rescue at the Reed Sea. The dividing of the water in Exod 14:21 corresponds to the splitting of the chaotic Sea Monster at the beginning of creation. The Israelites are rescued because chaos is defeated and remains subdued by *חֹק* "limit, law, regulation, allotted portion" – that is to say, limits are set to chaos through morality and law. Consequently the rescue at the sea leads on to the gift of the Torah on Zion. The two acts provide the foundation for Israel's identity. The gift of the Torah also means that God imposes a limitation on himself through law. The fact that this constellation is repeated in the Mara episode (Exod 15:22–26) shows how fundamental it is. The miracle of the transformation of bitter water into sweet shows God in the

role of the one who heals his people. On the one hand he defeats chaos in the form of the bitter water; on the other the miracle is directly linked with the setting up of *חֶקֶל וּמִשְׁפָּט*, law and judgment, and with the admonition to keep the commandments and statutes of the Torah. In his way God determines Israel's identity.

In "The Song of the Sea and Isaiah: Exodus 15 in Post-monarchic Prophetic Discourse," *Ian Douglas Wilson* discusses the *Wirkungsgeschichte* in the Persian and early Hellenistic periods of the foundational event of salvation history, the passage through the sea during the liberation from Egypt. Special influence here emanates from the song in Exodus 15, in which the salvation-history event is fused with the myth about YHWH's fight against the chaotic sea. From this struggle Israel in its passage through the sea emerges as newly born people of God. The starting point for the importance of the song in the formation of tradition during the Persian and Hellenistic period is provided by the textual agreements with the doxology in Isa 12:1–6 (compare especially the direct citation of Exod 15:2 in Isa 12:2). Similar allusions can be found throughout the whole book of Isaiah, Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah included, in some cases as a promise of a new exodus. Here we have both the water motif (Isa 43:1–7) and also the motif of the struggle against chaos (Isa 51:9–11). For the self-understanding and the social memory of Judaism in the era of the second temple, the tradition about the exodus and the miracle at the sea have become exceedingly formative.

Taking as example the concept of "flowing, overflowing water," *Sonya Kostamo* in "Imagining Water: The Overflowing Stream in Isa 66:12," asks about the "social memory" of the Jewish community in the late Persian-Hellenistic period. She considers all the instances of *שֶׁפַח* in the whole book of Isaiah (Isa 8:8; 10:22; 28:2, 15, 17, 18; 30:28; 43:2; 66:12) in order to discover the premises under which the reader in the ancient world will have understood Isa 66:12 in particular. It is surprising that the term generally used as image for an unstoppable hostile army which overflows the country is used in Isa 66:12 in the positive sense of overflowing blessing. Since Isa 66:12 presupposes, essentially speaking, the whole book of Isaiah, we have to assume that this was a deliberate re-interpretation: the statement acquires its significance from the very fact that it runs counter to its customary use. The peoples who stream to Jerusalem become a blessing for the community.

As well as the Nile, the Euphrates has also taken on a metaphorical meaning. In his essay "'But into the Water You Must Not Dip It' (Jeremiah 13:1): Methodological Reflections on How to Identify the Work of the Deuteronomistic Redaction in the Book of Jeremiah," *Hermann Josef Stipp* proves in a detailed analysis that Jeremiah's two wanderings at

the Euphrates as they are related in Jer 13:1–11 are in every respect fictitious. The symbolic act is a redactional text in which the announcement of judgment against the deported people in Babylon is played out, and it prophesies that they will be completely annihilated. The analysis of Jeremiah 13 becomes a methodological paradigm. On the one hand it shows that for the historical evaluation of texts literary-critical analyses are indispensable, and on the other that hypotheses based essentially on linguistic criteria are not sufficient.

The negative opposite pole to the provision with water is drought, and the famine that follows it. A catastrophe of this kind is the guiding motif in the book of Joel, and its first two chapters are analysed by *Christoph Levin* in “Drought and Locust Plague in Joel 1–2.” It emerges that the basis of today’s text is a hymn on the accession to the throne of the weather god, which has been preserved in Joel 2. In a second step this was linked in Joel 1 with a lament over a drought which describes in moving images the effect of the lack of water. The description of a locus plague was added on a third level.

In his essay “Coping with Drought and Famine in some Post-Exilic texts,” *Bob Becking* looks at the catastrophic effects of drought, and the ways of coping with them. From the psychological viewpoint, there are three basic ways of reacting to great natural disasters. These are generally linked with each other: (1) acceptance; (2) a search for the reasons as far as this is possible; (3) coping with the emotions which the catastrophe evokes. There are good reasons for assuming that there were periods of extreme aridity in the Achaemenid period too (538–333 BCE). With the presuppositions of the ancient world, the mental coming to terms with catastrophes of this kind took place as a matter of course in the religious context. Becking chooses three examples which certainly or probably reflect the experience of famine: Nehemiah 5; Psalm 126 and Haggai 1. In Nehemiah 5 the catastrophe is countered through the remission of debts – that is to say, through practical measures. Psalm 126 expects that God will bring about a turn of events, while Haggai 1 on the other hand puts faith in the appeal to cast egoism aside and to devote efforts to the rebuilding of the temple.

In myth, the watery chaos takes form as a fighting god. This motif, too, brings out the ambivalent experience with water. It is personified not only as the life-threatening sea god, but also as the weather god who protects life and guarantees the land’s fertility. This concept can in its turn also be transferred to the political powers. According to *Reinhard Müller* in “Adad’s Overflowing Scourge and the Weather God of Zion: Observations on Motif History in Isa 28:14–18,” the expression שוט שוטף “an overflowing scourge” in Isa 28:15, 18 points both to the

scourge of the fighting weather god Adad (for which there is also iconographical evidence), as well as to the empire of Assyria, which crushed the Levantine monarchies with its mighty armies. If we presuppose that the saying goes back to the 8th century prophet Isaiah, this is as much as to say that in the face of this military flood there is no escape.

The Job dialogue shows the varied ideas which can be associated with water. In "Thinking of Water in the book of Job: An Introduction to the Job Literature," *Urmas Nõmmik* counts no fewer than 32 lexemes which are connected with water. They are distributed throughout the whole dialogue, and in all the literary strata which developed step by step from the late Persian period onwards. It is only in the frame scenes that the motif is missing. In the dialogue, water is one of the especially significant images. With its intrinsic ambivalence, water is especially suited to illustrate Job's existential situation. Water metaphors are already frequent in the earliest form of the dialogue. They illustrate Job's misery and the human being's transience, but they can also be used to describe Job's innocence or the wellbeing of the righteous. In the divine speeches YHWH's curbing of the chaotic sea is a central motif.

As an example from the Old Testament's historical books, *Juha Pakkala* in "Water in 1–2 Kings" surveys the significance of water in the books of Kings. In parts of these two books the motif occurs with striking frequency and great variety. There is almost always a link with prophecy. At the centre are the water miracles which are ascribed to Elijah and Elisha. The books of Kings bundles together the possibilities open to the water motif in the Old Testament as if through a burning glass. It is only the chaotic, threatening side of water which is not mentioned, and similarly water as a means of (cultic) purification is also missing.

The king's ordering, "cosmic" power could prove itself when he puts into effect hydraulic projects, in order to supply the people with water and so as to diminish the risk of flooding. In "Water Control and Royal Propaganda: Sennacherib's Boast in 2 Kgs 19:24 (= Isa 37:25)," *William Morrow* gives examples drawn from the whole of the ancient Near East. In a counter-move, the kings set out to destroy the water supply of their enemies. 2 Kgs 19:23–24 lets the prophet Isaiah cite an utterance of Sennacherib's in which he boasts that he has dried up "all Egypt's rivers." The study shows that this was a widespread motif which would apply to a number of kings, and in this special case would fit Esarhaddon rather than Sennacherib. The anachronism serves to emphasize the contrast between YHWH and the great king; for ac-

according to the exodus tradition it was YHWH who dried up Egypt's water.

A sign of the king's ordering power was especially the well-watered garden, such as the one described in the Bible's creation narrative. In "Manasseh in Paradise? The Influence of ANE Palace Garden Imagery in LXX 2 Chronicles 33:20," *Louis Jonker* lists a large number of instances for the garden culture of the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Persian great kings. In the Persian era particularly, the garden counted as an expression of the blossoming of royal power, as the Greek loan word *paradeisos* shows. What is remarkable is that the word *paradeisos* appears in the Greek translation of 2 Chr 33:20, in the burial note for King Manasseh, moreover without any Hebrew equivalent and in distinction from the parallel in 2 Kgs 21:18, where Manasseh is buried in Uzza's garden. The king, who is described in 2 Chronicles as repentant and righteous, is elevated to the same level as that of the Persian and Hellenistic great kings. The reading may also be influenced by the culture of Egyptian garden tombs, with which the translators were familiar from their environment in the 2nd century.

One of the forms in which water appears is dew. In "Dew in the Enochic literature," *Peter Juhás* investigates the motif in the Ethiopian book of Enoch, a collection of five originally independent writings which go back to the 3rd century BCE. At the same time he gives an example taken from the sphere of non-canonical Jewish literature. In its earliest form, the *Astronomical Book* and the *Book of the Watchers*, dew, which is normally associated with blessing, is connected in a striking way with the winds which cause destruction. The cosmological speculation behind this idea is probably Mesopotamian in origin. Magic texts from Mesopotamia say that evil dew descends from the stars. It may well be that the Babylonian diaspora passed on this tradition; for traces of the idea can also be found in the Babylonian Talmud. In the later *Similitudes*, the notion about the storehouses of the wind – an idea also familiar from the Bible – is transferred to the dew, and linked with the dwelling place of the righteous. In the *Epistle*, dew is involved in the punishment of sinners, and also seems to play a part in the resurrection.

There is evidence for the special importance of water among the individual Jewish groups associated with Qumran and in their literature, as *Samuel Thomas* is able to show in "Living Water by the Dead Sea: Some Water Metaphors in the Qumran Scrolls." It is easy to see why this is the case, given Qumran's desert position. But water had also a prominent significance in Qumran because of the emphasized purification rites. Literary sources are the *Community Rule*, the *Damascus Docu-*

ment, and the *Pesharim*. The key role played by water is shown by the interplay between the discourse related to the motif in the texts, the experienced dependence on water and dealings with water, and finally the ritual use of water. What emerges is a particular "mental image" of water which became characteristic for the identity of the *Yahad* both inwardly and outwardly.

In his essay "The Fluid Boundaries of Life, the Universe and Yahweh," *James R. Linville* shows how important water became as metaphor in the Bible, taking the picture of God as example. The mode of appearance in which water occurs in the Bible and which is linked in some way or another with God is of astonishing variety. It can be in extreme contrast, providing the foundation for life and also destroying it. What is characteristic of the Bible is the way it joins the fate of the individual with the collective history of God's people, and this again with the mythical ideas about the struggle against chaos. In the water metaphor, the experience of human beings in and with nature merges seamlessly into their experiences in the historical and social world. In this sense water is a metaphor which is especially well suited for God himself. Even the monotheistic concept of God is inconceivable unless that one God has many facets. "Perhaps the ever-malleable water is the most fitting symbol of the biblical deity of all."

Water can be a leading motif not only for the idea of God but on the human side as well. In "Drawing Out Moses: Water as a Personal Motif of the Biblical Character," *Peter Sabo* shows this from the picture of Moses drawn by the biblical tradition. Here there is a whole series of narratives in which water is important: the exposure of the newly born babies in the Nile, the encounter with the daughters of the Midianite priest at a well, the meeting with Pharaoh at the Nile, the crossing of the Reed Sea, and the provision of water for the people during their passage through the desert. In an extensive re-telling, Peter Sabo presents the possible symbolism which can be deduced from the individual scenes, and the way in which this links the scenes together – for example, the rescue of Moses with the help of the Nile and out of the Nile, and the rescue of the Israelites with the help of the Reed Sea, and out of the Reed Sea. "The biography of Israel" (Ilana Pardes) is reflected in the biography of Moses and water plays an important role in it.

Finally, *Francis Landy*, "Fluvial Fantasies," shows the wealth of multifaceted, and often seemingly contradictory associations that are bound up with rivers in the Hebrew Bible. Rivers form boundaries, but as ways for transport and communication they provide links as well. They ensure irrigation, but can also prove to be a threat through flooding. Especially impressive are the imaginary rivers of paradise in Gen

2:10–14, a “fluvial fantasy” which cannot be translated into any real concept. This links the mythical rivers Pishon and Gihon with the real rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and at the same time with history, since Solomon’s anointing takes place in Jerusalem on the Gihon (1 Kings 1). The ambivalence of the Nile in Pharaoh’s dream (Genesis 41) is striking: both the fat and the lean cows come out of the river, as do both the fat and the meagre ears of corn – life and death. Rivers in the Psalter are similarly ambivalent. On the one hand they are God’s opponents (Psalm 93) which he overcomes. On the other hand they are an image for the yearning for God (Psalm 42).

III

“Water is good to think with.” In a modification of the familiar saying “Animals are good to think with” (attributed to Claude Lévi-Strauss), the essays in this volume show with their great variety the immense scope of water as an image and metaphor to bring out graphically and mentally existential and religious circumstances and to link them with the experienced world. Water, like light, is the necessary precondition for all life and is experienced as an indispensable part of both daily life and cultic practice; and consequently both hope and fear find expression through experiences with water. The metaphors do not affect the accompanying circumstances alone; they touch their religious centre itself, the idea of God. It is an advantage here that water is ambivalent – in this respect like the experience of God itself. Both droughts and floods are experienced as existential threats. The inexhaustible variety of its modes of appearance is one reason why in religious tradition, in religious conceptuality, in religious praxis, and in the hopes for future consummation, water is one of the most important factors. The Judaism of the Second Temple period and its literary heritage are a very well suited test case. The paradigmatic importance for religious history and theology in general is considerable.

Thinking of Water in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Judah: An Exploration

EHUD BEN ZVI

1. Introduction

Water was, of course, vital to the existence of the community in Judah during the late Persian/early Hellenistic period in very practical terms. In fact, water is vital to the existence of any human community or even to most eco-systems anywhere and anytime, both directly and indirectly. Precisely because water is a vital resource and is widely acknowledged as such, because it is experienced by all, and directly and indirectly touches most aspects of human and community life, water often develops into a very important ideological and linguistic symbol that stands for and evokes central concepts (or networks of concepts). To be sure, these concepts, and even the symbolic values socially assigned to 'water,' may vary from group to group and are historically dependent. This being the case, the study of 'water' itself, that is, of what 'water' may stand for in a particular community and of the roles played by 'thinking of water' in such a community is likely to shape a pathway leading to a better understanding of matters that are important to that community and to its social mindscape in general.

Since every member of the community interacts with water at multiple levels (both in the 'literal' and seemingly less literal, or 'symbolic,' meaning of the term), one is to expect that within the discourse of the community, water will carry numerous associations. To be sure, not all of these associations are equally important for the reconstruction of the social mindscape of the community; there are obvious issues of mind-share. For instance, in Canada, water is more likely to evoke and stand symbolically for wilderness, purity, glaciers and rivers, or conversely, in particular settings, for pollution, eco-degradation and the like. It is far less likely that the first associations a person in Canada would come up with after hearing or reading the term 'water' would be those conveyed by expressions such as 'treading water' and 'does not hold water,' even if these are widely used expressions.

In our case, it is my contention that one may learn much about the social mindscape of the community in Yehud by exploring 'thinking of

water' and concepts expressed through references to water within the symbolic system of the late Persian/early Hellenistic period. From a methodological perspective, two somewhat related approaches seem to me to hold much promise as heuristic tools for exploring these matters.

The first approach is an analysis of the main sets of social memories that were embodied in central 'water' sites of memory. For example, one may explore particular rivers, chief among them the Jordan,¹ but also Edenic rivers and other mnemonically important rivers such as the Euphrates and the Wadi of Egypt. One may also explore seas, such as the Reed Sea, or the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, which is, among others, the sea of Jonah and the sailors' adventures. One may also explore memories of 'the flood,' particular springs as sites of memory (e.g., the Gihon) and other mnemonic water sites. These may evoke particular events—e.g., the presence or absence of rain or dew—or certain locations or water bodies—e.g., wells, pools.

If one proceeds in this way, one is to look at central areas of conceptual overlap in the messages conveyed by 'water' in these sites of memory and then advance general considerations about 'water' and how 'water' contributed to the shaping and re-shaping of these sites of memory. Given my own general approaches to the reconstruction of the social mindscape of the community and my research focus on social memory in ancient Israel, this is the approach that I would usually take to deal with these matters. This approach has much to commend it, and I am glad that other contributors to this volume are taking it, in one way or another. There is one minor caveat though: this approach is somewhat systemically weighed down by the fact that it does not focus directly on 'water' per se or 'thinking of water,' but on particular mnemonic places or events. This problem can be dealt with, but requires attention.

A complementary approach for understanding 'water' and 'thinking of water' within the social mindscape of the community is to look at the use of 'water' in metaphors as part of the common way in which the community formulated, reformulated and expressed concepts. To be sure, this endeavour assumes an approach to metaphor according to which metaphors are "categorical, class-inclusion assertions" and in which the 'vehicle' (here, 'water') is meant to exemplify a cognitive, readily available conceptual category and serves to frame a blended

1 On the Jordan River, see recently, R. S. Havrelock, *River Jordan: the Mythology of a Dividing Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

conceptual space that includes both the 'topic' and the 'vehicle' of the metaphor.²

To explore the matters mentioned above within this research path, one has to look at the main categories formulated, expressed, represented and exemplified by 'water' in particular texts within the discourse of the community and at some of the mentioned blended spaces. Such an analysis would serve as a starting point for exploring the main features and significations that 'water' evoked and even the semantic or pragmatic (depending on one's definition of these two terms) meanings of 'water'³ within the community. In turn, given that 'water' was communally acknowledged as vital, such considerations are likely to shed light on what the community considered to be very important, as well as on the roles that 'thinking of water' may have played in the community.

In either case, whether one studies memories or metaphors involving water (and at times the boundaries are clearly porous), one should explore the discursive, underlying grammar that made the use of 'water' in these particular ways possible. The same holds true for exploring the ways in which 'water' participated in integrated networks of meaning and in the formulation and expression of concepts, without which 'water' itself would lose its ability to convey (and facilitate the construction of) meaning within the community. Only such an approach may help us to reconstruct what water meant and evoked, that is, to reconstruct the 'water' that existed within the general social mindscape of the relevant communities and the social and cognitive roles associated with 'thinking of water.'

Even a preliminary survey of *all* these issues as they relate to late Persian/early Hellenistic Judah (or its literati whose world was shaped and reflected in their central textual repertoire) stands beyond the scope of this or any paper. Thus, choices have to be made. My choice here is to focus on *some* metaphors and the conceptual categories that they evoked so as to illustrate how they may relate to conceptual networks, social memories and generative grammars, and in order that we may gain insights as to what 'thinking of water' involved.

2 See, for instance, S. Glucksberg, "How Metaphors Create Categories — Quickly," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (ed. R. W. Gibbs Jr.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 67–83. Of course, this approach to metaphor is not universally followed.

3 See J. Stern, "Metaphors, Semantics and Context," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (ed. R. W. Gibbs Jr.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 262–77.

For the present purposes and given the practical constraints on any essay, I have decided to deal with only *some* of the conceptual sets shaped by and around associations with 'water.' Water simply appears, directly or indirectly, in far too many metaphors within the textual repertoire of the period. It is impossible to deal with them all in one paper, or even a collection of papers.

Before going ahead, a final methodological consideration must be stressed, namely the differentiation between 'topic' and 'vehicle.' To state that 'YHWH is water' is neither semantically nor pragmatically necessarily the same as to state that 'water is YHWH.'

2. Thinking of 'Water': 'Water' and YHWH

Ancient readers of Jer 2:13 learned through their reading of a godly text that YHWH is מקור מים חיים "the fountain of living water." A similar concept is expressed in Ps 36:9–10. Readers of Jer 17:13 are required to conceptualize YHWH as מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל. The text reads:

מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה כִּלְעֻזְקִיד יִבְשׁוּ [יסורי K] וְסוּרֵי בְּאֶרְזָךְ יִכְתְּבוּ כִּי עָזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם־חַיִּים אֶת־יְהוָה

which is often translated as follows:

"O hope of Israel! O LORD! All who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be recorded in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, the LORD" (NRSV).

Although מְקוֹה means 'hope' (cf. Jer 14:8; Ezra 10:2 and 1 Chr 29:15), it also carries, at least by connotation, a secondary sense of 'body of water' or 'pool' as demonstrated by the fact that מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל is explicitly associated to מְקוֹר מַיִם־חַיִּים "the fountain of living water" through a clear, textually inscribed parallel structure and as suggested by the occurrence of the verb יִבְשׁוּ, which carries the sense of "shall be ashamed" (root בוש in the Q stem) but visually and phonetically evokes a sense of 'dry up'.⁴ Thus, מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל in Jer 17:13 carries the meaning of 'the hope of Israel' and at the very least in a connoted sense, 'the gathering place

4 On the double meaning conveyed by the reference to YHWH as מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל in Jer 14:8; 17:13 see, for instance, W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 433; cf. E. K. Holt, "The Fountain of Living Water and the Deceitful Brook: the Pool of Water Metaphors in the Book of Jeremiah (MT)," in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. P. van Hecke; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 99–117. On YHWH as water see E. K. Holt, " '...ad fontes aquarum': God as water in the Psalms?," in *Metaphors in the Psalms* (ed. P. van Hecke and A. Labahn; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 71–85.

of (living) waters.’ The authors, and more importantly, the readers of the text, that is, the community, used ‘water’ to conceptualize YHWH.

Other texts within the repertoire of the community caused their ancient readers to imagine YHWH in ‘water’ terms. An interesting example is Isa 58:11, which reads:

וְהָיָה יְהוָה תְּמִיד וְהִשְׁבִּיעַ בְּצִמְצָחוֹת נַפְשֶׁךָ וְעֲצָמֶיךָ יִחְלִיץ וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֹן רֶחֶוּ וְכִמְוָצָא מִיַּם אֲשֶׁר
לֹא יִכָּזְבוּ מִיָּמִיו

“The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail” (NRSV).⁵

This text is particularly relevant, because not only is a concept of YHWH obviously expressed and formulated in ‘water’ terms—water is the only fluid that can satisfy the needs of the community in parched places—but also because the readers are asked to imagine that the community that drinks such ‘water’ imitates the deity and becomes itself a reliable spring of water. In this case, water is used to think of and express (partial) imitatio Dei and thus, partial deification of the community whose ‘water’ is divine.

The metaphorical language of thirsting for YHWH implies and evokes the motif of YHWH as ‘water’ (see Ps 42:3; 63:2). A similar motif and a similar generative grammar is at work in conceptual images of people thirsting for YHWH’s words (Amos 8:11, see below).

As mentioned above, today water may evoke concepts of pristine purity, but, in part precisely because it evokes such images, it is likely to be successfully used to evoke concepts of environmental degradation, pollution and ecological disaster. In fact, water is at the center of many contemporary dystopias. A similar, discursive generative grammar was at work in the communities discussed here. Conceptualizations of YHWH in terms of ‘water’ (including source of ‘water’) were used to formulate and express blessings, and also calamity.

Thus YHWH has terrifying waves (see Ps 88:8), or may be conceptualized in terms of a deceitful brook whose water is unreliable (see Jer 15:18), or even as the source of poisonous water (see Jer 8:14; 9:15; 23:15). YHWH is conceptualized as ‘water’ in the form of ‘dew’ in Hos 14:5 in the context of an utopian future, and thus YHWH/dew is associated with a sense of a ‘water’ that makes the land/people blossom. But there is a negative aspect of ‘dew’ as well; sinful people who reject YHWH can also be thought of in terms of ‘dew,’ particularly in a dys-

5 Compare and contrast with Isa 1:30. These basic metaphors provided the shared generative grammar that led to diverse texts in various books.

topian context (Hos 13:3). In such a case 'dew' does not evoke fertility, but a lack thereof, and above all it evokes ephemerality; it serves to construe and communicate an image of something (in this case, a 'water') that vanishes quickly and which cannot but fail to provide any life-giving water, therefore leading the community to images such as those of chaff. Within this world of 'water' facilitated discourse, when the people are imagined as 'dew,' YHWH is not; and vice versa, when YHWH is like 'dew' the people are certainly not.

There can also be no doubt that YHWH was conceived as both the source of water and of lack of water (e.g., Ps 74:15; a numerous references to divinely caused drought).

In addition, since Israel was often imagined as—and condemned for—being irrational and having an unnatural tendency to follow para-gods (including the 'work of their hands') who could never provide what YHWH provides, there was a generative conceptual grammar at work that facilitated thinking about and communicating these matters in 'water' terms—namely, necessarily failing and remembering that failed 'water' was associated with Israel's failed attempts at replacing YHWH with para-gods (e.g., Jer 2:13, 18).⁶

Metaphors are "categorical, class inclusion assertions." YHWH is 'water' or the source of 'water,' because both YHWH and 'water' can partake in a particular blended category in which both are conceptualized as vital resources. The closest superordinate category in this set is construed as that of crucial, vital resources, without which there is no life.

But, of course, there are other 'vital' resources. YHWH may partake in other blended categories by using different vehicles. Thus YHWH is also, *inter alia*, conceptualized in terms of 'fire' (e.g., Deut 4:24; 9:3) and 'light' (e.g., Isa 10: 17; 60:1; Ps 18:28; 27:1; and see theophoric names, such as the one of the prophet Uriahu in Jer 26:20–23). To be sure, this does not mean that 'water' was identified with, or conceptualized as, 'fire' or 'light' or the like, even metaphorically. The fact that constructions such as 'water is fire/light' do not emerge within a community in which 'YHWH is water' and 'YHWH is fire or light,' demonstrates be-

6 כִּישְׁתִּים רְעוֹת עָשָׂה עָמִי אֲתִי עָזְבוּ מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים לְחֻצָּב לָהֶם בְּאֵרוֹת בָּאֵרֹת נִשְׁבְּרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכְלֹ הַמַּיִם
 "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water." (Jer 2:13)

וְעַתָּה מִהֲלֵךְ לְדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְשׁוֹת מִי שְׁחֹר וּמִהֲלֵךְ לְדֶרֶךְ אֲשׁוּר לְשׁוֹת מִי נָהָר
 "What then do you gain by going to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria, to drink the waters of the Euphrates?" (Jer 2:18)

yond any doubt that topics and vehicles are not interchangeable, and therefore, that a certain topic may be associated with two different vehicles without conceptually equating the latter two.

This consideration is general and certainly applies not only to ancient Israel. A simple example suffices: Romeo's references to Juliet as 'sun' and 'bright angel,' even as they appear in textual close proximity, do not mean that 'sun' has been conceptually equated with, or 'means,' 'bright angel.' Here, as in the previous cases, one is dealing with different superordinate categories. It is also worth noting that each vehicle carries its own set of semantic and/or pragmatic constraints. There is a reason why an Israelite could refer to YHWH as 'my light' but never as 'my water.'

This being said, the fact that the same 'topic' may be conceptualized and expressed in terms of different vehicles tends to create cognitive and mnemonic networks that may well relate at least some vehicles to one another. For instance, thinking of YHWH may bring up concepts of 'water' and 'light' or 'fire,' and cause the community to think of 'water' and 'fire' together. The community notices and remembers that references to one superordinate category may lead to references to the other (see Ps 36:10). Their attention is drawn again to the point that life cannot exist without water, or without light or fire, both 'literally' and in seemingly less literal (and often referred to as 'metaphorical') ways. Thinking of 'water,' 'fire' or 'light' becomes somewhat interconnected. A reference to one may facilitate the production of a reference to the other and vice versa (e.g., Ps 29:3–7). Moreover, at times 'water' and 'light' or 'fire' may appear as conceptual pairs (e.g., Ps 66:12; Prov 25:21–22).

Of course, this general situation facilitated the adoption of shared conceptualizations, even in very different contexts. Thus, for instance, concepts of 'fire' and 'water' interacted with each other and constructed a conceptual realm of substances that encircle, penetrate and cook meat (see 2 Chr 35:13).⁷ It is worth noting that, in this case, what we may call 'literal' and seemingly less 'literal' meanings of both are evoked by, and necessary for, formulating and applying the new conceptual category.

To be sure, differences remain. Thinking of YHWH in terms of 'water' or in terms of 'fire' makes a difference in relation to which divine attributes are emphasized and which are not, and which theophanic

7 See my "Revisiting 'Boiling in Fire' in 2 Chron. 35.13 and Related Passover Questions Text, Exegetical Needs, Concerns, and General Implications" in *Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Isaac Kalimi and Peter J. Haas; LHBOTS 439; London: T & T Clark, 2006) 238–50.

traditions (and social memories) are evoked. The point is still that a common network is created in which some features of 'water,' 'fire' or 'light' are emphasized or de-emphasized and that some conceptual functional similarities do emerge. After all, something connects, in some way, the 'sun' to the 'bright angel,' and both to Juliet.

3. Thinking of 'Water': 'Water' and YHWH-related Concepts

If YHWH is the source of living water, finding images within the community of YHWH's proper house and city (i.e., Jerusalem) as fountains of living/cosmic waters is only to be expected (e.g., Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 13:1; 14:8; Ps 46:5; cf. Isa 33:21; Ps 29:10).⁸ Conversely, when Jerusalem is imagined as an 'anti-YHWH' place, it becomes a source of waters that bring destruction (see Jer 6:7, *כְּהָקִיר בּוֹר מִיַּמֶּינָהּ כֵּן הִקְרָה רָעָתָהּ*, "as a well keeps its water fresh/cool, so she [Jerusalem] keeps fresh/cool her wickedness").

'Water' imagery is associated with images of nations other than Israel and their wealth flowing to Jerusalem when YHWH's empire is established (e.g., Isa 2:2; 66:12; Mic 4:2; cf. and cf. Jer 51:44). To be sure, the formulation of the concepts communicated by these texts in terms of 'water' is strongly influenced by the role of water as both a transport medium and as the main resource being transported. But that is not all. The nations other than Israel flow to Jerusalem bringing numerous goods and wealth, but they cannot bring 'water' to Jerusalem, because they cannot be the fountain of 'water.' Instead, Jerusalem is conceptualized as the fountain of 'water' for the nations.

8 Note also that Jerusalem is also imagined as a source of light (see Isa 60:1–3 as read in a way informed by Isa 60:19–20). See discussion above. The motif of cosmic waters at the 'center of the world' (and thus the abode of the central deity) is well-attested in the ancient Near East as a whole, both in Mesopotamia and in Western areas (see Ugarit). See, for instance, R. C. Van Leeuwen, "Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Mesopotamia and Israel," in *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel* (ed. R. J. Clifford; SBLSymS 36; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 67–90; reprinted in a slightly revised version as "Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel," in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations. Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible* (ed. M. J. Boda and J. Novotny; AOAT 366; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 399–421. For ways in which Jerusalemite traditions partake in this general tendency, see, for instance, B. C. Ollenburger, *Zion, the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* (JSOTSup 41; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1987), esp. 50–51.

As comparisons with the ancient Near East show, this 'water,' of course, is wisdom; a wisdom that is necessary for the maintenance of the proper world in the cosmos. In Jerusalem this 'water' was directly associated with YHWH and this deity's wisdom, which was in turn, by the late Persian/early Hellenistic Yehud/Judah, associated with YHWH's torah.

The process of thinking of wisdom (and closely related concepts) in terms of 'water' is reflected in, and communally activated by reading a variety of texts. For instance, the community read that תּוֹרַת חָכָם מְקוֹר חַיִּים "the teaching of the wise is an enlivening/giving life fountain" (Prov 13:14).⁹ Of course, within the discourse of the late Persian/early Hellenistic Yehud/Judah, no one is wiser than YHWH (see Job; cf. Isa 31:2). Moreover, since the concepts of wisdom and righteousness evoked each other in the discourse of the community, and given the considerations advanced before about networks of meaning, it is not surprising that the repertoire of the community included an expression such as מְקוֹר חַיִּים פִּי צַדִּיק "the mouth of the righteous is a giving life/enlivening fountain" (Prov 10:11).

To be sure, there are other enlivening fountains, and all partake in a network of meanings. For instance, "the fear of YHWH is a giving life fountain" (Prov 14:27). As is well known, by the late Persian/early Hellenistic period, "the fear of YHWH" was closely associated with W/wisdom (cf. Prov 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; Ps 111:10).

Thinking of W/wisdom in terms of 'water' draws attention to other aspects of W/wisdom. For instance, there is a well-known image of personified Wisdom inviting people to come to her banquet (Prov 9). The rhetorical situation here clearly requires that 'literal' water be substituted with tastier, and thus more desirable 'water,' namely 'wine.' Another network of associations is at work here. Clearly, conceptualizing, imagining and remembering Wisdom within this setting brings up strong associations between (tasty, desirable) 'water' (i.e., wine) and (tasty, desirable) food, and between the two of them with Wisdom.¹⁰ Just as 'water' partakes in a cognitive and mnemonic network with 'fire' and 'light,' here 'water' partakes in another network, with 'food.' Not surprisingly, given the semantic links between Wisdom and the word of YHWH, the latter network is also conceptualized through the

9 מְקוֹר מִיַּם-חַיִּים appears as a shortened version of מְקוֹר חַיִּים; significantly, the term מְקוֹר alone already activates the sense of 'source' or 'spring' for fluids, mostly water. For an exception see Lev 20:18).

10 For 'great food' and Wisdom, see also Prov 24:13–14.

metaphor of thirst for water and hunger for bread (Amos 8:11). A very similar pattern is at work in Isa 55:1-3.¹¹

Another set of water metaphors particularly relevant for the present discussion is facilitated by the double meaning of the root ירה "water (as a verb)"/"teach." One may mention expressions such as יַמְרִינָה גַם "one who gives water/teaches" (Prov 11:25), which clearly evokes an image of 'watering' or 'raining' while at the same time conveying a sense of teaching. This text asks the community to conceptualize teaching as 'water,' and the teacher as both a recipient and distributor of 'water,' that is, wisdom.

Another example: the presence of YHWH was construed in terms of assured rain in Hos 6:3, while at the same time, the text connoted an image of YHWH teaching the earth and thus making it fertile, just as the rain does. YHWH/YHWH's teachings 'water' the earth. Here again, the conceptualization involves both the 'literal' and the seemingly less literal meanings of 'water.' Likewise when the literati read Hos 10:12, they cannot but think of a YHWH who may rain upon, or teach righteousness to, the community. Not surprisingly, righteousness (and justice), are both YHWH-related concepts, and both are associated elsewhere with 'water' (e.g., Amos 5:24).

It was not necessary for the community to resort to the double meaning of ירה to convey these significations; for instance, the community remembered that Moses sang: "May my teaching (לְקַחֲתִי) drop like the rain (מָטָר), my speech (אִמְרָתִי) condense like the dew; like showers (שִׁיעָרִים) on grass, like droplets (רִבִּיבִים) on new growth" (Deut 32:2).

The same holds true in Isa 55:10–11.¹² The community reading this text is asked to understand YHWH's word in terms of 'rain' and 'snow' (both 'water'). This is done so as to formulate and communicate a concept of YHWH's word as an entity that, by its very nature, cannot fail to deliver that which it was intended to. 'Just' as watering the earth necessarily—within the world evoked by this text—makes "it bring forth and sprout" and thus provides seed to the 'sower' and bread to the 'eater,' so 'water'/YHWH's word fulfills its intended purpose. Within this process of blending concepts and superordinate categorization, not only

11 Cf., for instance, Sir 15:3; 24:21; 51:24.

12 כִּי כַאֲשֶׁר יֵרֵד הַגֶּשֶׁם וְהַשֶּׁלֶג מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמָּה לֹא יָשׁוּב כִּי אִם־הִרְוָה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהוֹלִידָהּ וְהִצְמִיחָהּ וְנָתַן צֶרֶע לְדָרֶע וְלָקָם לְאֹכֵל: כֹּן יִהְיֶה דְבָרִי אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּי לֹא־יָשׁוּב אֵלַי רִיקָם כִּי אִם־עֲשֶׂה אֶת־אֲשֶׁר תַּפְצִיטִי וְהַצְלִיחַ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּיו: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

are 'water' and YHWH's word conceptualized in particular terms, but given that YHWH's word cannot but produce its intended effect, its source, YHWH, is also thought of as one who always succeeds, through his word. Thus YHWH is conceived of in the same way as 'water' is in the natural and human world (note the reference to the sower and the eater).

The preceding considerations show without a doubt that the underlying discursive grammar generating and making memorable these images/conceptualizations was not dependent on the potential for fortunate plays on words, but on networks of meanings and other conceptualizations deeply ingrained in the social mindscape of the community.

As a final example for this section, 'water' terms were used to think of knowledge of (the 'glory' of) YHWH, though in a different way than the ones at work in the preceding examples. Thinking of 'water' (and by means of 'water') in the cases reflected on and expressed in Isa 11:9 and Hab 2:14 does not mean thinking of rain, dew, snow, or rivers, but of the sea. Thinking of the sea was meant to bring forth an image of the sea covered by ('literal') waters so as to express the concept of land, which is the abode of human beings, covered with 'water,' that is, with knowledge of YHWH.

In all the cases reviewed in this section, the superordinate category that we may call 'water' serves to explain the absolutely necessary character of the resource YHWH/'water,' as in the examples in the previous section. But this is only part of the story. In each of the cases discussed above, particular semantic networks were activated and these played a very significant role in terms of formulating and expressing concepts. Moreover, in each of them a particular generative discursive logic was at work. The case of the pair of 'water' and 'food' was mentioned above. This expected pairing led to two similar, but not identical, superordinate blended conceptual categories for YHWH-related concepts. To illustrate this, water and food are both indispensable, but wisdom/YHWH's word as food cannot be imagined as flowing from fountains. Moreover, 'water' is 'eternally' unchangeable; 'food' cannot stand forever and must be replenished.

A different kind of pair, this time not structured around 'common life' experience (e.g., food and drink), but one that reflected a deep-seated way of constructing teaching, namely, the association of rain and teaching carried a sense of 'natural' essence to teaching and helped bring to mind a strong fertility overtone (cf. the similar role of the pair 'rain' and 'snow' as a tool for formulating YHWH-related concepts). This emphatic overtone of essential, successful fertility, along with the

ideological and mnemonic preference to construe the flood as a unique event (see Gen 9:9–17) shaped within the discourse of the community a relatively strong tendency to imagine YHWH as raining a substance other than ‘water’ when causing a catastrophic destruction. An alternative substance such as sulfur or fire may be rained in such instances.¹³ Not incidentally, ‘sulfur’ and ‘fire’ appear as replacements for ‘water’ in other formulations of destruction and calamity (see references to ‘streams of sulfur’ in Isa 30:33; 34:9) or as necessary companions of ‘water’ in others, see Ezek 38:22.¹⁴

In other cases, it is a very different pair, namely ‘land and sea,’ that is brought to bear to help the community formulate, express, vicariously experience through reading, and hope for the realization of the world in which knowledge of YHWH covers all; e.g.,

כִּי־מִלְאָהּ הָאָרֶץ דָּעָה אֶת־יְהוָה כַּמִּים לָהֶם מְכֻסִּים

“for the earth will be full of the knowledge of YHWH”

as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9).

Reading and remembering a text such as *וַיִּגַּל כַּמִּים מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בְּנַחַל אֵיתָן* (Amos 5:24) rendered other sets of potential attributes that may be expressed by and assigned to the category of ‘water’ particularly salient. In this case, ‘water’ that is ‘justice’ is conceptualized as eminently powerful, and righteousness is conceptualized as constant.¹⁵

The figure of Lady Wisdom offering a banquet is, of course, a female figure. Wisdom was strongly characterized as female within the community in the last Persian period/early Hellenistic period, as well as in the entire region and beyond for a long time. Given that in the discourse of the community W/wisdom was YHWH’s and his creation (traditionally, W/wisdom was the [main] daughter of a male deity; see Prov 8:22–31), and consequently by that time, W/wisdom was associated with YHWH’s teachings/instructions (cf., among others, Deut 4:5–8; Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2) and the latter were partially construed as female as

13 See, for instance, *וַיְהִי הַמָּטָר עַל־סֹדֶם וְעַל־עֵמֶרָה גִּפְרִית וָאֵשׁ מֵאֵת יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם* “YHWH rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from the YHWH out of heaven” in Gen 19:24 or the similar *וַיִּמָּטֶר עַל־רָשָׁעִים פְּחִים אֵשׁ וְגִפְרִית* “he [YHWH] will rain coals of fire and sulfur” in Ps 11:6.

14 A way to associate destruction with ‘water’ was to turn drops of rain into a rain of ‘hailstones’ (see Josh 10:11 and discussion below) or to attached to ‘water’ other elements whose presence strongly marked the negative characteristics of the relevant ‘water’ that was being rained. See Ezek 38:22.

15 See *וַיִּגַּל כַּמִּים מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בְּנַחַל אֵיתָן*. See F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 528.

well.¹⁶ One may note that when Wisdom is associated with these banquets, what she offers, being wisdom, is a 'water' that is an alluring, very desirable 'water,' that is, 'wine.' In these cases, thinking of 'water' is thinking of gendered 'water.' It is worth noting that when 'water' is associated with YHWH, 'water' is, at least for the most part, male; when it is associated with YHWH-related concepts (e.g., wisdom, YHWH's instructions) it may be female. Yet, to be sure, human teachers tend strongly to be male (see wisdom literature). The 'agent' is often male; the 'product' may be 'female.' Needless to say, hierarchical considerations well embedded in the social mindscape of this, and many other communities in the ancient world, were at work here.

4. 'Water' and creation stories/acts of ordering

Creation stories in which 'water' is identified with chaos and thus has to be defeated by the ordering deity so as to create order are well attested in the ancient Near East. A version of these stories appears in Genesis 1:1–2:3.¹⁷ Primordial 'water' in these chapters stood for chaos and had to be set in proper order, through the division and separation of different types of water.¹⁸ Post-creation 'water' is thus properly subdued, ordered 'water,' and as such attests to the power of the creator (see, for instance, Ps 95:3–5; 98:7–8).

Of course, YHWH's ordered 'water' is still powerful 'water,' but it is YHWH's (see, for instance, Ps 29:3, 10). The concept of powerful 'water,' facilitates the development of images of 'water' as YHWH's direct tool for destruction, as in the case of the flood, but also in cases such as those encoded in and evoked by, for instance, Josh 10:11; 2 Sam 5:20; Isa 30:28, 30; 1 Chr 14:11, or as YHWH's indirect tool of destruction (see, for instance, Isa 8:6–8).

To be sure, the mighty, destructive potential of 'water' expressed in these formulations was balanced by its counterpart, the extremely positive character of 'gentle waters.' Needless to say, people should accept rather than reject the 'gentle waters.' If they fail to do so, they are to be construed as liable to be punished, according to a commonly accepted

16 Cf. with some gender implication of the imagery of YHWH's torah in Ps 119:77, 92, 174. It is worth mentioning that, given the elevated character of this female, she may invite people and express her desire to educate them (see also Prov 8:31; cf. Prov 8:30).

17 Another version appears in Prov 8:22–31.

18 Cf. Prov 8:22–29.

logic, by means of destructive 'waters.'¹⁹ In fact, the literati who read Isa 8:6 remembered that Judah's (and from their perspective 'Israel's') rejection of 'gentle waters' led to its punishment by means of 'mighty, destroying waters.' Thus, whereas 'water' functions as an essential element in YHWH's future, utopian Jerusalem (see above), it is also associated with the city's calamity and the sin that caused it.

Returning to the issue of creation and 'water,' there is a secondary act of creation within the memory of the community. A world without a temple for the deity and without priests for the deity is not complete. Within the discourse of 'Israel' in the late Persian/early Hellenistic period, the next step in the creation of the ordered world had to be, and was, the creation of 'Israel.' Significantly, Israel's birth was associated with separating the waters at the Reed Sea and later at the Jordan. YHWH was understood as the father of the world (and of wisdom), but also directly as the father of 'Israel.' The water imagery and the description of the birth of the latter may also carry an image of a father who not only fathers the 'boy' but also fulfills the role of the midwife at his birth.²⁰ Again, conceptualizations of 'water,' along with widely attested cross-cultural associations between birth and 'water' play an important role in this regard.

But, of course, the completion of the creation was not fulfilled with the creation of 'Israel,' but with the establishment of the future, permanent temple. This event was also associated with 'water' (Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 14:8), though in a very different way. 'Water' in its various manifestations was an important tool to formulate, express and imagine creation at its multiple stages. Thinking of creation in this community required thinking of 'water.' One may also say that within the community, thinking of 'water' went hand in hand with thinking of creation, given the general ideological perspective of the community.²¹

One final observation to conclude this section: networks of meanings and their constraints played important roles in establishing the ways in which 'water' could be used to formulate ideas and images of the temple. Since 'water,' particularly in the form of 'rivers,' was—for obvious reasons—rarely associated with a 'high place,' and given that temples were usually construed as standing high (i.e., dominant from an architectural viewpoint) and the utopian Jerusalem temple as standing at the highest place (i.e., the most dominant from an architectural

19 There are multiple examples of this logic, see, for instance, Jer 5:19; 1 Chr 28:9.

20 Cf. I. Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel: National Narratives in the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 16–39.

21 An expression of this ideological perspective is in Ps 19:2.

perspective), there was a very strong need for additional, complementary blended categories to formulate and express the temple that will be. The most relevant of them is, of course, the 'temple mount' (e.g., Isa 2:2; Mic 4:1).

5. 'Water' and Condition Change

'Literal' water played (and still plays in many communities) a role in ritual performances that effects a change of condition. Thus, within the mnemonic world of late Persian/early Hellenistic Judah/Yehud, 'water' played an important role, for instance, in rituals for the general consecration of the people at Mt. Sinai (Exod 19:10) and in the ordination of Aaron and his sons (Exod 29:4). In addition, 'water' played a role in the removal of ritual impurities associated with skin diseases (see Lev 14:8–9), bodily discharges (Lev 15; Deut 23:11–12) and the like. Purification water was also central in some utopian images of the future (see Zech 13:1).

Of course, in all the previous cases, 'water' was conceptually integrated into ritual patterns that included various communally instituted cleansing rituals, which often involved other elements such as animal sacrifices and blood.²² But the scope of the use of 'water' for condition-changing rituals is not restricted to this type of rituals. To illustrate, 'water' played an important role in performing the change of condition of David in 2 Sam 12:20 and of Na'aman in 2 Kgs 5:10–14.

In all these cases and across these very different types of ritual, 'water' became associated with a liminal stage that had to be crossed in order to move from condition (a) to condition (b). This use of 'water' activates the semantic network in which 'water' as conceptually associated with 'birthing water' is obviously created (see above about Israel's birth, both at the Reed Sea and at the Jordan). Because 'water' activated

22 See, for instance, Milgrom's words concerning the Levites' induction:

...the threefold purificatory rites prescribed for the Levites. The Levites are bathed (laundering implies bathing, vv. 7, 21), sprinkled with purificatory waters (containing the ashes of a red cow), and expiation is made for them by a purification bull. Bathing cleanses them of minor impurities; the purificatory water, of corpse contamination; the purification bull—of their severe impurities, which, according to the Priestly system described above, have impinged on the sanctuary and polluted its altar. Thus this induction rite purifies the Levites of their impurities and the altar of its contamination...

(J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991], 278).

also the semantic network in which it was conceived mainly in terms of 'bathing' and 'laundrying,' it served to formulate and express, at least by connotation, a sense of 'cleansing' and 'removing stain.' The conceptual category expressed by 'water' in this section, presents attributes to which little or no attention is drawn in other conceptual categories shaped by 'water,' such as those discussed in previous sections. Thinking of water in the cases discussed here meant thinking of something different. But here too, a combination of some 'literal' and some often considered less 'literal' aspects of water was essential for 'water' to fulfill its role in the symbolic system of the community.

6. Conclusion

Expressions of 'thinking of water' within the authoritative repertoire of the community are abundant. The number of examples could be easily multiplied and different choices regarding their inclusion and exclusion for explicit discussion here could be made. The goal of the present paper was not to provide any kind of comprehensive study of any particular aspect of 'thinking of water,' but to suggest in broad strokes something that is representative of the general discourse of the community, and for that reason, texts expressing and reflecting ways of 'thinking of water' and what was thought of by means of 'thinking of water' were taken from all across the different literary genres that existed within the authoritative repertoire of the community.

The exploration of these issues led to some clear results and suggested venues for future research. For instance, it has shown the pervasiveness of 'water' as a vehicle for metaphor construction. It has shown that the superordinate, blended category that these metaphors created tended to stress different aspects of basic qualities associated with, and evoked by the term 'water' in the discourse of the late Persian/early Hellenistic period. It has demonstrated that the meanings associated with 'water' were never context-independent, that different semantic networks were activated depending on the context and that often the so-called 'literal' and 'non-literal' meanings associated with 'water' were both necessary to shape the meanings expressed by 'water.' 'Water' was often intertwined with different sets of concepts, such as 'fire,' 'light,' 'land,' 'righteousness,' 'food,' 'sacrificial offerings' and 'blood,' but thinking of 'water' also included taking directly experienced and remembered water in the form of seas, rivers, showers, dew, and a daily resource for cooking, laundrying and washing into account. Even the image of the nations flowing to Jerusalem carries, in some form, a

connection to the 'literal' water as a fluid and its ability to transport goods and people. At the same time, water is never only 'literal' in these metaphors.

The present exploration has shown that 'water' was associated with 'birth' and 'death and destruction,' with fertility and providing for life and also with causing doom, with images of a future, ideal Jerusalem and with Jerusalem's calamity. 'Water' stood for both chaos and order. Water may be raging or quiet, threatening or comforting, or even Edenic. It may convey a sense of permanence and unfailing nature, as well as extreme impermanence. In other words, 'water' itself embodied fuzziness and the complementary character, from cognitive and social memory perspectives, of these seemingly mutually exclusionary oppositions. Given that this tendency was at work and dominant across the entire discourse of the period and the social mindscape of the community,²³ it is no surprise that such a central concept as 'water' was construed as embodying this preference as well.

This paper has shown that although 'sinners' were construed, at times, as conceiving 'water' as belonging to failed para-gods (e.g., Egypt), the community knew that 'water' is YHWH's. But 'water' was not only YHWH's, it was also a helpful and at times necessary tool to enable the community to formulate expressions meant to shape and communicate YHWH and YHWH-related concepts. In other words, YHWH and YHWH-related concepts were often conceptualized through 'water' metaphors. 'Water' in these cases was not only an essential resource, but at times, one that could elevate its recipients and make them godly. Divine teaching was 'water' and godly teachers provided 'water.' 'Water' was also associated with liminal spaces and contributed much to the ability of individuals and the community as a whole to cross through them.

In sum, this study has shown that 'water' turned into a central semantic playground in which the community could express, formulate, reformulate and communicate in intelligible ways concepts that would have been difficult for them to express in other manners. Thinking of water was, to some extent, a way to facilitate thinking of a plethora of

23 I discussed this tendency elsewhere. See, for instance, my "On Social Memory and Identity Formation in Late Persian Yehud: A Historian's Viewpoint with a Focus on Prophetic Literature, Chronicles and the Dtr. Historical Collection," in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (ed. L. Jonker; FAT 2/53; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 95–148.

various matters that were central to the community and above all, a way to facilitate thinking.²⁴

24 It is to be stressed that many of these considerations are not unique at all to 'thinking of water' in Judah in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period. There is a reason for that too. Neither Judah, nor Judah in this period specifically, was so unique. That said, and to state the obvious, a study of 'thinking of water' and 'water' in other ancient Near Eastern cultures (or in the late Second Temple period in Judah—e.g., Qumran—or in later communities such as those in which early Christianities or Judaism emerged) requires separate essays. See the essays by Samuel Thomas (Qumran) and Stephanie Anthonioz (ancient Mesopotamia) in this volume.

Sacred Springs and Liminal Rivers: Water and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean

MARTTI NISSINEN

Water is the absolute precondition for the existence of everything that grows, breaths, and moves. Every living creature is dependent on water, not only to sustain living organisms, but also for other important functions, such as cleaning and transportation. At the same time, water—not just the lack of water but water itself—may also bring about death, since all breathing creatures may drown in it, and flooding water may destroy the same life it has upheld and (re)generated.¹

According to Thales of Miletos, the pre-Socratic Greek Philosopher, water was the first principle, generator, and nourisher of all things.² Thales's view may have been influenced not only by everyday experience, but also by the idea of the divine power of water—an idea “ubiquitous in religious history.”³ Being the source of both life and death, it is no wonder that divine attributes were given to water. Since water has an “infinitely mutable and thereby unpredictable” quality,⁴ it was understood as the site and medium of supernatural agency. Consequently, water is often connected to magical, medical, and divinatory prac-

1 For the significance of water to human culture in general, see Veronica Strang, *The Meaning of Water* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

2 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3, 983b; cf. Diogenes Laertius 1.27. See Othmar Keel, “Altägyptische und biblische Weltbilder, die Anfänge der vorsokratischen Philosophie und das ‘Αρχή-Problem in späten biblischen Schriften,” in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Beate Ego; FAT 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 27–63, esp. 36–40; Mark Munn, “Earth and Water: The Foundations of Sovereignty in Ancient Thought,” in *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing and Hygiene from Antiquity through Renaissance* (ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott; Technology and Change in History 11; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 191–210, esp. 206.

3 Strang, *The Meaning of Water*, 85.

4 Rabun Taylor, “River Raptures: Containment and Control of Water in Greek and Roman Constructions of Identity,” in *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing and Hygiene from Antiquity through Renaissance* (ed. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott; Technology and Change in History 11; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 21–42, esp. 30.

tices.⁵ Even in prophecy, as this essay attempts to demonstrate, water occasionally features either as part of the oracular process, or as an ingredient of the prophetic message.

All three aforementioned qualities of water—that is: (1) the source of life and purity; (2) a medium for practical functions and supernatural agency; and (3) a destructive power—can be found in Mesopotamian, biblical, and Greek prophetic sources, albeit in different proportions depending on the nature of the source material. In the following essay, I will not refer to every single case in which water is mentioned in these source materials, but will focus on these three recurring topics.

1. Water as Source of Life and Purity

Water, for understandable reasons, is used globally as a metaphor for life, probably without any notable culture-specificity. For equally understandable reasons, in many contexts, including the prophetic ones, the life-giving quality of water is attributed to supernatural agency, if not presented as having a divine substance itself. This is the case in the book of Jeremiah, where God is presented as “the fountain of living water” (Jer 2:13; 17:13); this sounds like an apotheosis of the “fountain of life” that is found in Proverbs and Psalms (Ps 36:10; Prov 10:11; 13:14; 14:27; 16:22; cf. the “fountain of wisdom” Prov 18:4). The connotation of the ‘living’ water (*mayim hayyim*) is twofold: it combines the life-giving quality of water with its evolution from a natural source, as opposed to the still-standing water of an artificial cistern (Jer 2:13).⁶ In Jer 17:13, forsaking God, the fountain of living water, is equated with death: “O hope of Israel! O Lord! All who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be recorded in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, the Lord.”

5 See, e.g., Taylor, “River Raptures,” 30–31; Yigit Erbil and Alice Mouton, “Water in Ancient Anatolian Religions: An Archaeological and Philological Inquiry on the Hittite Evidence,” *JNES* 71 (2012): 53–74; Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination* (Blackwell Ancient Religions; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 98–99; Ann Jeffers, *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria* (SHCANE 8; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 160–66; M. J. Geller, “West Meets East: Early Greek and Babylonian Diagnosis,” in *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine* (ed. Herman F. J. Horstmannshoff, Marten Stol, and C. R. Van Tilburg; Studies in Ancient Medicine 27; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 24–25, 47–48, 51–52.

6 Cf. Siegfried Herrmann, *Jeremia* (BKAT 12/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 127–28.

The source of the living water is frequently located in the temple of Jerusalem (or the city of Jerusalem, which amounts to the same thing). Ps 46:5 reads: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High." This contrafactual image turns Jerusalem into a mythological fortress and paradise, in the midst of the chaos of roaring waters, trembling mountains, and raging nations.⁷ The image is reinforced in Ezekiel's temple vision in Ezek 47, in which water runs from below the threshold of the entrance to the temple, growing into a mighty stream that flows to every part of the land, nourishing trees that bear fresh fruit every month, "because the water for them flows from the sanctuary" (v. 12).⁸ The water coming forth from the temple also becomes the source of eschatological prosperity in Joel 3:18 and Zech 14:8,⁹ not to forget the book of Revelation, in which John is shown "the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev 22:1). Between the branches of this river the tree of life grows (v. 2), turning the city into a paradise, a topic widely elaborated in apocalyptic literature.¹⁰

An interesting offshoot of this idea of the river flowing from a divine source can be found in the book of Ben Sira, in which Ben Sira identifies himself as a teacher, and as a rivulet from the stream of Lady Wisdom in Sir 24:30–34: "As for me, I was like a canal from a river, like a water channel into a garden. I said, 'I will water my garden and drench my flower-beds.' And lo, my canal became a river, and my river a sea. I will again make instruction shine forth like the dawn, and I will make it clear from far away. I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations." This is, without doubt, the closest association made between prophecy and water in early Hellenistic Jewish literature, making the "source of the living water" also the source of prophecy, and turning water into a metaphor of wisdom and

7 See Beate Ego, "Die Wasser der Gottesstadt: Zu einem Motiv der Zionstradition und seinen kosmologischen Implikationen," in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Beate Ego; FAT 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 361–89, esp. 363–69. Already Philo (*Somm.* 2:246) takes it for granted that "the writer here means, figuratively, to speak of some other city than the visible city of God."

8 Cf. Daniel Bodi, "The Double Current and the Tree of Healing in Ezekiel 47:1–12 in Light of Babylonian Iconography and Texts," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Chicago, Ill., 17 November 2012).

9 For a comparison of Ezek 47, Joel 3:18, and Zech 14:8, see Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25C; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 435–36.

10 See David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22* (WBC 52C; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1175–78 for an abundance of references.

the Torah.¹¹ The water channel, once again, represents the teacher-prophet whose instruction is presented as watering the garden, that is, the people attentive to his teaching.

Forsaking the only source of the living water implies worshipping other deities, which implies impurity, at least in texts with a cultic concern. This highlights another globally known quality of water: its healing and cleansing power, which can be seen as a corollary to its life-giving capacity.¹² In Ezekiel, the restoration of the people of Israel also means their purification: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you” (Ezek 36:25). In Zech 13:1, the eschatological day of salvation brings about the purification of the people: “On that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.”

Ritual purity of priests and other cultic functionaries was of paramount importance everywhere in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean. Divination was commonly considered a ritual act, and therefore purity was required of diviners in Mesopotamia¹³ as well as in Greece.¹⁴ In biblical and Mesopotamian sources, however, the status of the prophets in terms of purity remains unclear. Prophetic performances do not seem to have been regarded as ritual acts in the Near East, and there are no records of purification practices preceding them; one Neo-Assyrian letter reports a prophetic performance *before* the *bīt rimki* rituals performed to the substitute king in Akkad,¹⁵ but this says nothing

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- 11 Cf. Pancratius C. Beentjes, “What about Apocalypticism in the Book of Ben Sira,” in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (ed. Martti Nissinen; VTSup 148; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 207–27, esp. 221–23; Benjamin G. Wright, “Conflicted Boundaries: Ben Sira, Sage and Seer,” *ibid.*, 229–53, esp. 234–38; Martti Nissinen, “Wisdom as Mediatrix in Sirach 24: Ben Sira, Love Lyrics, and Prophecy,” in *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola* (ed. Mikko Luukko, Saana Svärd, and Raija Mattila; StOr 106; Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society 2009), 377–90.
 - 12 See Jonathan David Lawrence, *Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).
 - 13 See Michaël Guichard and Lionel Marti, “Purity in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Paleo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Periods,” in *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism* (ed. Christian Frevel and Christophe Nihan; Dynamics in the History of Religion 3; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 47–113, esp. 80–81.
 - 14 See Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 119–25; Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 226–29.
 - 15 SAA 10 352; for this letter, see Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*, Vol. 2: *Commentary and Appendices* (AOAT 5/2; Kevelaer:

about the purity of the female prophet in question. In the Hebrew Bible, the so-called calling vision of the prophet Isaiah includes the purification of the prophet's unclean lips, not with water, but by touching his lips with a piece of glowing coal (Isa 6:6–7). The background of this scene was probably the mouth-washing or mouth-opening rituals performed in the ancient Near East, but it is unclear whether it implies a general requirement of a prophets' purity.¹⁶ The prophet Ezekiel is expressly told by God to cook unclean food as a sign of the impure state of the people exiled from Jerusalem, and he replies by saying that he has never eaten anything unclean (Ezek 4:9–17). This, however, indicates defiling Ezekiel's priestly, rather than prophetic, body.¹⁷

If the association between prophets and purity remains somewhat faint in Near Eastern texts, Greek sources leave no doubt about the significance of purity in the oracular process, at least when it comes to Delphi and Didyma, the two most significant oracle sites of the Hellenistic Greek world. The Pythia of Delphi, according to Plutarch, had to be unmarried and "virginal," because she served as Apollo's bride; the Pythia's "virginity" does not necessarily have sexual overtones but rather refers to her state of purity and freedom from bodily pollution in the first place.¹⁸ The Pythia had to undergo ritual preparations for every oracular session. The sources tell of a purifying bath after dawn in the Castalian spring,¹⁹ maybe also drinking from it. The inquirers of the oracle, too, had to be ritually purified before being brought to the Pythia to receive the word of Apollo, and the priests ensured that the day was auspicious for the consultation by presenting a goat to Apollo and

Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983), 270–72; Martti Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources* (SAAS 7; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998), 68–77.

16 Victor Hurowitz, "Isaiah's Impure Lips and Their Purification in the Light of Akkadian Sources," *HUCA* 60 (1989): 39–89, suggests a background in the Mesopotamian mouth-washing ritual, and Gregory Yuri Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue and the Opening of the Mouth in Biblical Prophecy* (JSOTSup 311; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 116–64, in the Egyptian mouth-opening ritual.

17 Thus Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Body Piercings: The Priestly Body and the 'Body' of the Temple in Ezekiel," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1 (2012): 231–45, esp. 236–38; cf. Margaret S. Odell, "You Are What You Eat: Ezekiel and the Scroll," *JBL* 117 (1998): 229–48, according to whom the symbolic acts in Ezek 1–5 indicate a process during which Ezekiel "must relinquish or, at least, adapt certain elements of his priestly identity before he can assume the role of a prophet" (p. 248).

18 For the Pythia's sexual abstinence as a matter of ritual purity, see H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle, Vol. 1: The History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), 35; Michael Attyah Flower, *The Seer in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 224–25; Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 42–43.

19 E.g., scholia on Euripides' *Phoenician Maidens*.

sprinkling it with water. If the goat nodded its head, the sign was positive, and the goat was sacrificed.²⁰

Also in the temple of Apollo at Didyma, the female prophet prepared herself for the reception of the words of the god.²¹ Iamblichus, the third-century CE neoplatonist, writes about the bathing and the fasting of the prophetess in preparation for prophesying:²²

This is what is shown by the abundance of sacrifices, the established custom of the whole ritual, and everything that is performed with due piety prior to divination: also the baths of the prophetess, her fasting for three whole days, abiding in the innermost sanctuaries, already possessed by light, and rejoicing in it for a long time.

The purifying function of water, thus, played an important role in the workings of the Greek oracle. Sacred springs were not always associated with divinatory power,²³ but many times they appear as a vector of transmitting divine knowledge.²⁴ In the most significant Greek oracle sites they served as the source of not only purity but also divine inspiration, as we shall see in the next chapter.

20 This reconstruction of events is based on Euripides, *Ion* 93, 419; *Phoen.* 224; Plutarch, *Moralia* 3:397a; 3:435b; see also Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, Vol. 1, 19–45.

21 Cf. Joseph Fontenrose, *Didyma: Apollo's Oracle, Cult, and Companions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 81–82.

22 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 3.11 (127:11–13); see Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell, *Iamblichus: De mysteriis: Translated with Introduction and Notes* (SBLWGRW 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 148–49.

23 For example, the famous Sacred Spring at Corinth is not known as an oracle site. See Guy D. R. Sanders, “The Sacred Spring: Landscape and Traditions,” in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society* (ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel N. Schowalter, and James C. Walters; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 365–89.

24 See, e.g., Walter Burkert, “Olbia and Apollo of Didyma: A New Oracle Text,” in *Apollo: Origins and Influences* (ed. Jon Solomon; Tucson, Ariz.: The University of Arizona Press, 1994), 49–60, esp. 59; Rose Lou Bengisu, “Lydian Mount Karios,” in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren* (ed. Eugene N. Lane; RGRW 131; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1–36, esp. 9–10; Jennifer Larson, *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11–20. For later times, see Gary R. Varner, *Sacred Wells: A Study in the History, Meaning, and Mythology of Holy Wells and Waters* (2d ed.; New York: Algora Publishing, 2009); James Rattue, *The Living Stream: Holy Wells in Historical Context* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995).

2. Water as Medium of Divine Agency

Water is used as a medium of supernatural agency in different kinds of divination, such as the Anatolian ichthyomancy (fish divination)²⁵ and the Mesopotamian and Greek lecanomancy (oil divination).²⁶ Such media are less common in prophecy, which is essentially a non-technical method of divination. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of water or drink being used as a part of the oracular process, either as a means of triggering the prophets' altered state of consciousness or as a constituent of a ritual act connected to prophesying—or as both, as is the case in Jewish mysticism. In the Hekhalot literature, water not only appears as a ritual precondition for divine revelation, but also as the site where the revelation takes place, and, most notably, as a medium for inducing the altered state of consciousness.²⁷ It is quite probable that the medieval Jewish mystics' predilection for water had its roots in the use of water as a medium of divine knowledge in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean.

We have just seen how the Hebrew Bible frequently locates the source of the living water in the temple of Jerusalem. Although in Jerusalem no actual source of water formed part of the architecture of the temple, many Greek sanctuaries were built around a natural well, as is true for some major sites of the Apollonian oracle where the water played a role in the oracular process. This, to be sure, was not the case at Delphi, where the Castalian spring was not located within the sanctuary itself but about 500 m east of its entrance. The inner sanctum (*adyton*) of the temple of Apollo at Delphi was built around the “navel of the earth,” (*omphalos*)²⁸, where there was no source of water but there was, allegedly, a chasm exhaling vapors emerging from the ground. The tripod on which the Pythia sat and uttered the words of Apollo

25 See Daniela Lefèvre-Novaro and Alice Mouton, “Aux origins de l’ichthyomancie en Anatolie ancienne: sources archéologiques et textuelles,” *Anatolica* 34 (2008): 7–51.

26 For sources of Mesopotamian lecanomancy, see Giovanni Pettinato, *Die Ölwahrsagung bei den Babyloniern* (Studi Semitici 21–22; Roma: Istituto di studi del Vicino Oriente, 1966); for Greek and Roman lecanomancy, see Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 39–40; 205–6. Unfortunately, I have not been able to consult the recent study by Netanel Anor, *Reading the Oil Omens: A Study of Practice and Record of Mesopotamian Lecanomancy* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2010).

27 See Geoffrey W. Dennis, “The Use of Water as a Medium for Altered States of Consciousness in Early Jewish Mysticism: A Cross-Disciplinary Analysis,” *Anthropology of Consciousness* 19 (2008): 84–106.

28 See Julia Kindt, “Omphalos,” *Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (ed. Roger S. Bagnall, et al.; Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 4900–4901.

was located above the spot where the chasm was believed to produce the vapors that contributed to the altered state of mind of the female prophet.²⁹

Unlike Delphi, the other two members of the “big three” locations of Apollonian prophecy, the temples at Didyma and Claros, were both constructed around a water source. At the heart of the temple of Apollo at Didyma there was a very large open-air *adyton*, within which there was a “little temple” (*naiskos*), as well as the sacred spring with an archaeologically attested spring chamber built around it.³⁰ It was probably a natural water source that had an important function in the oracular sessions which, therefore, took place in the *adyton*. Iamblichus reports that the female prophet of Didyma wet her feet in the water, probably of the sacred spring, and inhaled its vapors. This, according to him, enabled the prophet to “partake” of Apollo, that is, to become possessed by him:

And as for the woman at Branchidai who gives oracles, it is either by holding the staff first given by a certain god that she is filled by the divine radiance; or else when sitting on the axle she predicts the future; or when dipping her feet or skirt in the water, or inhaling vapour from the water, at any rate, she receives (*dekhetai*) the god: prepared and made ready by any or all of these preliminaries for his reception from without, she partakes (*metalambanei*) the god.³¹

Iamblichus’ terminology of “receiving” and “partaking” of the god corresponds to his idea of divine possession as a communion with the divine, in which the human consciousness is partly or wholly replaced with the divine consciousness: “For either the god possesses us, or we become wholly the god’s property, or we exercise our activity in common with him. And sometimes we share in the god’s lowest power, sometimes in his intermediate, and sometimes in his primary power. And sometimes there is a mere participation, sometimes a communion,

29 Thus Plutarch, *Moralia* 5:433c-d; Diodorus Siculus 16.26.1–6. For the problem of the chasm and the reality of the presence of gases, see John Bowden, *Classical Athens and the Delphic Oracle: Divination and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18–19.

30 For the architecture of the temple at Didyma, see Fontenrose, *Didyma*, 28–44; Klaus Tuchelt, *Branchidai—Didyma: Geschichte, Ausgrabung und Wiederentdeckung eines antiken Heiligtums, 1765–1900* (Antike Welt Sondernummer 22 = Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie 3; Mainz: von Zabern, 1991); Alan M. Greaves, *Miletos: A History* (London: Routledge, 2002), 111–17.

31 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 3.11 (127:4–9); see Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell, *Iamblichus*, 148–49.

and sometimes even a union.”³² Iamblichus relates that even the male prophet of Claros, through similar means as the female prophet of Didyma—fasting, seclusion, and drinking the water from the sacred spring—“has the inspiration of the god illuminating the pure sanctuary of his own soul, and providing for it an unhindered divine possession, and a perfect and unimpeded presence.”³³ One could imagine that the communion with the divine took place without the help of any material media, and it is possible that Iamblichus gives a neoplatonic explanation to practices that were known to have existed at these oracle sites. Nevertheless, it deserves attention that Iamblichus also recognized the use of music in inducing the state of possession, the explanation being that “before it gave itself to the body, the soul heard the divine harmony.”³⁴

Even at Claros an underground *adyton* has been uncovered in excavations,³⁵ and ancient writers refer to a sacred spring that played an important role in producing oracles at this site. Iamblichus writes: “It is agreed by everyone that the oracle at Colophon prophesies by means of water. There is a spring in a subterranean chamber, and from it the prophet drinks on certain appointed nights, after performing many preliminary ceremonies, and after drinking, he delivers his oracles, no longer seen by the spectators present. That this water has oracular power is immediately obvious.”³⁶ Even Pliny knows that “in the cave of Apollo at Claros at Colophon there is a pool, a draught from which causes marvelous oracular utterances to be produced, though the life of the drinkers is shortened.”³⁷ Tacitus relates that the prophet at Claros was an illiterate man: “There, it is not a woman, as at Delphi, but a priest chosen from certain families, generally from Miletus, who ascertains simply the number and the names of the applicants. Then de-

32 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 3.5 (111:7–11); see Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbelle, *Iamblichus*, 130–31; Crystal Addey, “Divine Possession and Divination in the Graeco-Roman World: The Evidence from Iamblichus’s *On the Mysteries*,” in *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (ed. Bettina E. Schmidt and Lucy Huskinson; London: Continuum, 2010), 171–85.

33 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 3.11 (126:1–3); see Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbelle, *Iamblichus*, 146–47.

34 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 3.9 (120:3–10); see Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbelle, *Iamblichus*, 140–41; Addey, “Divine Possession and Divination in the Graeco-Roman World,” 177–78.

35 For the archaeology of Claros, see Juliette de La Genière, “Klaros: Bilan provisoire de dix campagnes de fouilles,” *REA* 100 (1998): 235–56.

36 Iamblichus, *De Myst.* 3.11 (124:8–12); see Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbelle, *Iamblichus*, 144–147.

37 Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 2.232.

scending into a cave and drinking a draught from a secret spring, the man, who is commonly ignorant of letters and of poetry, utters a response in verse answering to the thoughts conceived in the mind of any inquirer.”³⁸ Again, water functions as a medium of divine inspiration and knowledge.

The oracles of Zeus were pronounced in the fourth major oracle site, Dodona, the best-known symbol of which was the sacred oak.³⁹ According to some ancient authors, the rustling of the tree’s branches and leaves were interpreted by priests called *selloi*. Later texts name even more sources of prophetic inspiration, for instance, the sounds of Dodona’s famous bronze cauldrons; these are associated with the prophetesses’ activity by Clement of Alexandria and by Lucan.⁴⁰

Even water is associated with Dodona prophecy in later sources, according to which, the “murmuring” of the spring flowing under the roots of the oak inspired the female prophets to prophesy.⁴¹ Archaeologically, no such spring has been found at Dodona; rather, the idea of a spring at Dodona is comparable to the inspirational springs at other famous oracle sites, and attests “both to the practice of embroidering great religious sites with additional, remarkable physical characteristics ... and to the tendency to transfer the traits of one oracle to another.”⁴²

The most reliable information concerning the connection between the sacred spring and prophecy comes from Didyma and Claros. In both cases, the sacred spring is at the heart of the sanctuary, where prophesying also takes place. The case of Delphi is different because it involves not water but vapors, but the idea is the same, that a substance conveys the divine spirit to the prophet, causing her to reach an altered state of consciousness and, thus, to be able to utter divine words. Even at Delphi, the water of the Castalian spring is necessary in the Pythia’s preparations for receiving the divine word.

38 Tacitus, *Annales* 2.54.

39 For the oracle of Dodona, see Esther Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Barbara Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods: Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 331–52; Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 60–72.

40 Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 2.11; Lucan 6.425.

41 Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid* 3.466: *circa hoc templum quercus inmanis fuisse dicitur, ex cuius radicibus fons manabat, qui suo murmure instinctu deorum diversis oracula reddebat: quae murmura anus Pelias nomine interpretata hominibus disserebat*. Cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 2.228.

42 Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 66. For the archaeology of Dodona, see Martina Dieterle, *Dodona: Religionsgeschichtliche und historische Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung des Zeus-Heiligtums* (Spudasmata 116; Hildesheim: Olms, 2007).

This kind of association of water and prophecy is known neither in the Hebrew Bible nor in any other ancient Near Eastern source. Nothing in these sources suggests that the “living water” available at temples ever played a role in the prophetic process of communication. This may partly be due to our lack of knowledge about how the oracular process in the Near East actually worked, but one should also note that Mesopotamian temples were not constructed around natural springs with which the prophetic activity inside could have been connected; the same can be said of the temple of Jerusalem, whose association with water belongs to an eschatological reality (see above).

There is one letter from Mari, though, suggesting that prophetic inspiration could have been triggered by means of drinking a liquid of some kind:⁴³

Concerning the campaign my lord is planning, I gave drink to male and female persons to inquire about signs.⁴⁴ The oracle is extremely favorable to my lord. Likewise, I inquired of male and female persons about Išme-Dagan. The oracle is unfavorable to him.

The one writing to King Zimri-Lim here is Queen Šibtu, who, even in another letter,⁴⁵ reports using the same divinatory technique, which is as obscure as it is interesting. Šibtu does not explicate what kind of drink she provided the male and female persons with, or how and why it facilitated the oracular process; in fact, she only mentions the act of giving drink, not the liquid itself. In any case, the men and women in

43 ARM 26 207 (= SBLWAW 12 17): 3–11; for interpretations of this text, see Jean-Marie Durand, “In vino veritas,” RA 76 (1982): 43–50; Claus Wilcke, “*ittātīm ašqi aštāl*: Medien in Mari?,” RA 77 (1983): 93; Jack M. Sasson, “The Posting of Letters with Divine Messages,” in *Florilegium Marianum II: Recueil d’études à la mémoire de Maurice Birot* (ed. Dominique Charpin and Jean-Marie Durand; Mémoires de NABU 3; Paris: SEPOA, 1994), 299–316, esp. 307–8; Martti Nissinen, “Prophetic Madness: Prophecy and Ecstasy in the Ancient Near East and in Greece,” in *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (ed. K. L. Noll and Brooks Schramm; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 3–29, esp. 15–16; Dominique Charpin, “Le prophétisme d’après les archives de Mari (xviii^e siècle av. J.-C.),” in *Les recueils prophétiques de la Bible: Origines, milieux, et contexts proche-oriental* (ed. Jean-Daniel Macchi, et al.; Le monde de la Bible 64; Geneva: Labor et fides, 2012), 31–73, esp. 65; Jonathan Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison* (CHANE 56; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 49–50.

44 This translation of the Akkadian phrase *ittātīm zikāram u šinništām ašqi* interprets the male and female persons themselves as signs in the same way a prophet appears in the *Epic of Zimri-Lim* (SBLWAW 12 64), line 139: “The hero of the land saw his sign, the prophet” (see Charpin, “Le prophétisme d’après les archives de Mari,” 65). Sasson, “The Posting of Letters with Divine Messages,” 308 translates “I gave male and female the signs to drink,” assuming that the drink contains the signs to be interpreted.

45 ARM 26 212 (= SBLWAW 12 22): 1–2.

question are prompted, by drinking, to utter the inquired oracles. It seems that this method of soliciting oracles was somewhat unusual, since Šibtu anticipated an accusation that she had obtained the oracle in an inappropriate way: "Perhaps my lord would say this: 'She has made them speak by fraudulent means.'"⁴⁶

In another letter from Mari, likewise sent by Queen Šibtu to her royal husband Zimri-Lim, the divine assembly under the leadership of Ea takes an oath by drinking water mixed with dirt taken from the door-jambs of Mari:⁴⁷

Door-jamb dirt from the gate of Mari was brought and dissolved in water. The gods and goddesses drank it and Ea said to the gods: "Stand up, those of you who intend harm to the brickwork of Mari or to the protective guardian [of Mari]!" The gods and the goddesses [said]: "We intend no harm to the brickwork of Mari or to the protective guardian of Mari!"

The historical context of this vision of the prophet Qišti-Diritim, quoted by Šibtu in her letter, is the invasion of the Elamites in Zimri-Lim's tenth regnal year, and it can be read as a prophetic endorsement of his military actions against the Elamites, protecting them under a divine oath.

Another example of the function of water as the medium in oath-taking can be found in the oracle of Ištar of Arbela belonging to the collection of prophecies pronounced at the meal of the covenant, that

46 ARM 26 207 (= SBLWAW 12 17): 35–36.

47 ARM 26 208 (= SBLWAW 12 18): r.15–26. For this text, see Christoph Uehlinger, "Audienz in der Götterwelt: Anthropomorphismus und Soziomorphismus in der Ikonographie eines altsyrischen Zylindersiegels," *UF* 24 (1992): 339–59, esp. 351–52; Jack M. Sasson, "Mari Apocalypticism Revisited," in *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipiński* (ed. K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors; OLA 65; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 285–98, esp. 286–87; Martti Nissinen, "Prophets and the Divine Council," in *Kein Land für sich allein: Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebir-nāri für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Ulrich Hübner and Ernst Axel Knauf; OBO 186; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 4–19, esp. 7–8; Dominique Charpin and Jean-Marie Durand, "Des volontaires contre l'Élam," in *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke* (ed. Walther Sallaberger, Konrad Volk, and Annette Zgoll; *Orientalia Biblica et Christiana* 14; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 63–76, esp. 74–75.

was served on the terrace of the Ešarra temple at Assur⁴⁸, on the occasion of Esarhaddon's enthronement in 680 BCE:⁴⁹

She gave them *šaršāru* water to drink. She filled a pitcher of one seah with *šaršāru* water, gave it to them and said: "You say to yourself: 'Ištar—she is small beer!' Then you go into your cities and your districts, eat your own bread and forget this covenant. But every time you drink this water you remember me and keep this covenant which I have made on behalf of Esarhaddon."

The text combines ritual actions with divine words and reads like a scribal compilation describing a ritual and the prophetic oracle pronounced during that ritual.⁵⁰ A specific kind of water, *mê šaršāru*, serves as a reminder of the covenant. The meaning of the word *šaršāru* is unclear,⁵¹ but it is also used in an incantation in which it also belongs to taking an oath by drinking water from *šaršāru*.⁵²

Here it is a prophet of Ištar who mediates divine words concerning the *adê* being made between the gods of Assyria and the vassal states, as well as between Esarhaddon and the vassal kings as the gods' earthly representatives. The oath is taken by gods and humans alike, the vassal kings participating in the meal of covenant, to which the gods are also invited by Ištar.⁵³ The specific water used for the oath-taking apparently functioned as a medium of divine agency, serving as a reminder, but also probably as the activator, of the covenant, hence ful-

48 The terrace of the Ešarra temple is mentioned as the scene of royal rituals in Assur; see Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), 25 (ad iii 2); G. van Driel, *The Cult of Aššur* (SSN 13; Assen: van Gorcum, 1969), 194.

49 SAA 9 3.4 (= SBLWAW 12 87) iii 3–15. For interpretations of this text, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, XIX–XX; Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium: Politische Theologie und Rechtsreform in Juda und Assyrien* (BZAW 284; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 80–84; Manfred Weippert, "'König, fürchte dich nicht!': Assyrische Prophetie im 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.," *Or* 71 (2002): 1–54, esp. 15–19; Nissinen, "Prophets and the Divine Council," 14–15; Matthijs J. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (VTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 409–11; Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 138–40.

50 Cf. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 411; Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 140.

51 Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, 25, associates it with the rabbinic *šaršūr*, which means a stone vessel used as a cooler (cf. CAD § 115 sub *šaršaru* B).

52 Šurpu iii 62; see Erica Reiner, *Šurpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations* (AfO Beiheft 11; Osnabrück: Biblio, 1970 [repr. 1956]), 21.

53 The tablet is broken here, but what remains can be read as Ištar's invitation to the gods (SAA 3.4 ii 35–36: DINGIR.MEŠ AD.MEŠ-ia ŠEŠ.MEŠ-ia al-ka-ni ina šà a-d[e-x x x x] "Come, gods, my fathers and brothers! [Enter] the coven[ant . . .].")

filling a function similar to the wine in Christian eucharist: "Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me" (cf. Mark 14:24; 1 Cor 11:25).

3. Water as Destructive Power

The flipside of the life-giving powers of water is its destructive force. The West Semitic and biblical mythology knows the Sea and the River as rivals and adversaries of benevolent divine powers.⁵⁴ In Ugaritic mythology, the chaotic and destructive aspect of Yam competes with the life-giving aspects of Baal.⁵⁵ Such a combat is even reflected in prophetic literature, for instance, in Hab 3:8: "Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Or your anger against the rivers, or your rage against the sea, when you drove your horses, your chariots to victory?" In the book of Ezekiel, the oracles against Tyre (Ezekiel 27–28) repeatedly use the expression "in the heart of the seas" (*bē-lēb yāmîm*) for the site of both dominion (27:4) and destruction (27:25–27); the corresponding Akkadian phrase *ina qabal tâmtim* denotes the utmost end of the horizon and symbolizes the global dominion of the Assyrian king.⁵⁶

Rivers in particular appear as liminal spaces that can bring about destruction as well as the act of salvation, through the crossing of them. The crossings of the Red Sea (Exod 14) and the river Jordan (Josh 3) are foundational events in biblical history, marking a transition from one status to another; the parting of waters by the prophets Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kgs 2:8, 14 is a clear reminiscent of this. Ancient Near Eastern kings, including Alexander the Great, repeatedly recorded crossings of

54 See, e.g., John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (UCOP 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

55 See Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, "Le combat de Ba'lu avec Yammu après les textes ougaritiques," *MARI* 7 (1993): 63–70; cf. Jean-Marie Durand, "Le mythologème du combat entre le dieu de l'orage et la mer en Mésopotamie," *MARI* 7 (1993): 41–61.

56 See Martin Lang and Robert Rollinger, "Im Herzen der Meere und in der Mitte des Meeres: Das Buch Ezechiel und die in assyrischer Zeit fassbaren Vorstellungen von den Grenzen der Welt," in *Interkulturalität in der Alten Welt: Vorderasien, Hellas, Ägypten und die vielfältigen Ebenen des Kontakts* (ed. Robert Rollinger, et al.; Philippika 34; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 207–64. The expression *qabal tâmtim* is used by the king of Tyre in Assurbanipal's annals, where he is said to dwell "in the heart of the sea" (Prism B §15 ii 42 and parallels); see Rykle Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 28, 216.

rivers during their campaigns, presenting them not merely as technical operations, but as acts of royal skill and divine will.⁵⁷

In Neo-Assyrian prophecy, rivers are part of the chaotic wilderness, full of all kinds of liminal spaces, that Ištar ranges through for the sake of the life of Assurbanipal, her beloved king:⁵⁸

Desiring your life I roam the steppe, continually crossing rivers and oceans, ranging mountains and alps. Continually crossing all rivers, I am finished off by droughts and showers. My charming figure they ravage; my body is exhausted and troubled for your sake.

This is reminiscent, not only of Gilgameš's roaming of the steppe after the death of Enkidu, but also of Esarhaddon's, Assurbanipal's father's, "roaming in the steppe"⁵⁹ while being expatriated during the civil war preceding his ascendance to the throne of Assyria.⁶⁰ Crossing rivers and oceans (*nārāti u tāmāti*), even "all rivers" (*nārāti kalīšina*), symbolizes the all-encompassing efforts of the goddess to save Assurbanipal's life in the middle of the civil war, and convince the divine council (*puhur ilāni*) about his kingship.⁶¹

The river already appears as the site of the enemies' destruction in a letter from Mari, in which the majordomo Sammetar reports the words of the prophet Lupahum:⁶²

As before, when the Yaminites came to me and settled in Saggaratum, I was the one who spoke to the king: "Do not make a treaty with the Yaminites! I shall drive the shepherds of their clans away to Hubur (*ina hu-*

57 See Robert Rollinger, *Alexander und die großen Ströme: Die Flußüberquerungen im Lichte altorientalischer Pioniertechniken (Schwimmschläuche, Keleke und Pontonbrücken)* (Classica et Orientalia 7; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013).

58 SAA 9 9 (= SBLWAW 12 94): 8–15.

59 Cf. SAA 9 1.8 (= SBLWAW 12 75) v 12–20: "I am the Lady of Arbela! To the king's mother since you implored me, saying: 'The one on the right and the other on the left you have placed in your lap. My own offspring you expelled to roam the steppe.'" This refers to Esarhaddon's two rebelling brothers.

60 For this text and the allusions to Gilgameš, see Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, II–L, 41; de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 405–8; Charles Halton, "Allusions to the Stream of Tradition in Neo-Assyrian Oracles," *ANES* 46 (2009): 50–61, esp. 57–58.

61 The tablet is dated to the year 650, when Assurbanipal was waging war against his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin; see Nissinen, "Prophets and the Divine Council," 12–13. According to de Jong, the text "skillfully ties up the fate of Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin with that of Gilgameš and Enkidu. The Leitmotif of SAA 9 9 is the life of Ashurbanipal, which through the Gilgameš-parallel mirrors the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin" (*Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 408).

62 ARM 26 199 (= SBLWAW 12 9): 32–39.

bu-ur-re-e), and the river will finish them off for you." Now then, he should not pledge himself without consulting God.

As the underworld river, Hubur⁶³ symbolizes the death of the Yaminites, but at the same time, it is also used as a pun on Habur, the tributary of the Euphrates within the area of the kingdom of Mari.⁶⁴ Lupahum's words present the prophecy concerning the defeat of the Yaminites as a "lesson that Zimri-Lim should be drawing from recent history"⁶⁵ in a situation where he has to decide whether to make a treaty with the king of Ešnunna.⁶⁶ The river is mentioned several times in the context of Esarhaddon's civil war and his eventual victory:⁶⁷

Fear not, king! I have spoken to you, I have not slandered you! I have inspired you with confidence, I have not caused you to come to shame! I will lead you safely across the River.

Similarly to the mention of Hubur/Habur in the Mari letter cited above, the prophetic reference to the river is both historical and mythological. The river probably represents mythical allusions⁶⁸, but is also a historical point of reference to Esarhaddon's victory over his brothers before his ascension to the Assyrian throne.⁶⁹ This is what Esarhaddon himself relates in his inscription:⁷⁰

I reached embankment of the Tigris and, upon the command of Sin and Šamaš, the lords of the harbor, I let all my troops jump across the broad river Tigris, as if it were nothing but a ditch.

63 See Hannes D. Galter, "Hubur," *DDD*² (1999): 430–31.

64 See Dominique Charpin, "Prophètes et rois dans le Proche-Orient amorrite: Nouvelles données, nouvelles perspectives," in *Florilegium Marianum VI: Recueil d'études à la mémoire d'André Parrot* (ed. Dominique Charpin and Jean-Marie Durand; Mémoires de NABU 4; Paris: SEPOA, 2002), 7–38, esp. 25 n. 149.

65 Jack M. Sasson, "Water beneath Straw: Adventures of a Prophetic Phrase in the Mari Archives," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (ed. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin, and Michael Sokoloff; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 599–608, esp. 603.

66 For the historical circumstances, see Charpin, "Prophètes et rois dans le Proche-Orient amorrite," 22–25.

67 SAA 9 1.6 (= SBLWAW 12 73) iii 30 – iv 4.

68 For the deification of the river Tigris, see Bendt Alster, "Tigris," *DDD*² (1999): 870–71.

69 Thus Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, LXXIII, 8; Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources*, 25. For a different historical interpretation of the oracle SAA 9 1.6, see de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 267–68, who dates it to the period preceding Esarhaddon's campaign to Egypt in 674 BCE.

70 Esarhaddon 1 (= Nineveh A = SBLWAW 12 97) i 84–86; see Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)* (RINAP 4; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 14.

Again, the crossing of the river appears as a divinely ordered act of salvation which is not merely part of a military strategy, but constitutes a transition from one phase to another, in Esarhaddon's case: from the chaotic period of the civil war to the restoration of kingship. The river represents a dangerous liminal space to be traversed before the transition is completed. As in the case of Hubur/Habur in the letter from Mari, the river symbolizes the victory of the king and the destruction of his enemies:⁷¹

As you were standing in their midst, I removed them from your presence, drove them up the mountain and rained fire and brimstone upon them. I slaughtered your enemies and filled the River with their blood.

The prophetic oracles and the royal inscriptions doubtlessly refer to historical events that accompanied Esarhaddon's rise to power, but both genres do it in a highly mythologized manner. The account of Esarhaddon's war against his brothers is replete with allusions to literary works that depict Ninurta's and Marduk's battles against their enemies (*Lugale*, *Enuma eliš*), equating the king to these gods and mythologizing his battles against his enemies.⁷²

Finally, the river appears as the site of salvation and destruction in Assurbanipal's inscription about his war against Elam in 653 BCE. The *grande finale* of this war takes place at the river Ulaya before entering Susa, the Elamite capital:⁷³

Upon the command of Aššur and Marduk, the great gods, my lords, who encouraged me with good omens, dreams, speech omens, and prophetic messages, I defeated them in Tell Tuba. With their bodies I stuffed up Ulaya. With their corpses, as if with thorn and thistle, I filled the outskirts of Susa.

Just as the crossing of the Tigris was the final and decisive ordeal Esarhaddon had to go through before his rise to power, the crossing of Ulaya marks the divinely ordained victory of Assurbanipal over the Elamites. Again, the river brings about salvation to the king and destruction to his enemies. Filling the river with their corpses is an image of total destruction that is also shown in the relief depicting Assurbani-

71 SAA 9 3.3 (= SBLWAW 12 86) ii 18–23.

72 See Amar Annus, *The God Ninurta in the Mythology and Royal Ideology of Ancient Mesopotamia* (SAAS 14; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 100; cf. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 259.

73 Prism B v 93–99 (= SBLWAW 12 101). See Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals*, 104, 225; for the historical circumstances, see Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources*, 46–51.

pal's war against the Elamites (figure). The lower register of the relief, originally belonging to the North Palace of Nineveh, shows the river Ulaya literally stuffed up with the dead bodies of the enemies.⁷⁴

Assurbanipal's relief is a prime example of a performative image that does not simply illustrate the events related in the inscription, as a visual copy of preexisting reality, but creates and renews that reality through the act of representation: "Representation was thought to make things happen, not simply to depict."⁷⁵ In fact, this is true not only for the relief but also for the inscription. Both the textual and pictorial media, rather than recording acts of eyewitnessing, carry an authoritative ideological interpretation of the recorded events.⁷⁶

Even the river, whether textual or graphic, has a performative function. It is "real" in the sense that it has a historical and geographical point of reference, but it is also contextualized by the textual/iconographic ideological program. The river retains its mythological value as a liminal space where both salvation and destruction take place, and it is indexical in constantly renewing the permanent meaning of the event in the minds of the audience.

74 For these reliefs and the epigraphs attached to them, see John Malcolm Russell, *The Writing on the Wall: Studies in the Architectural Context of Late Assyrian Palace Inscriptions* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 9; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 156–99; Zainab Bahrani, *Rituals of War: The Body and Violence in Mesopotamia* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 23–55.

75 Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 53.

76 See Christoph Uehlinger, "Neither Eyewitnesses, Nor Windows to the Past, but Valuable Testimony in its Own Right: Remarks on Iconography, Source Criticism and Ancient Data-Processing," in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (ed. H. G. M. Williamson; Proceedings of the British Academy 143; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 173–228.



Assurbanipal's war against the Elamites

4. Conclusion

The significance of water for prophecy reveals itself in manifold ways in ancient Eastern Mediterranean prophetic texts and practices. As the source of life, water can be equated with a benevolent deity. It can also be seen as a metaphor for, or manifestation of, divine favor. As a medium, water can be used as a direct source of prophetic inspiration, and as an effective means of supernatural action, whether it is used for purification or as a constituent of a ritual act. As a destructive power, water can be associated with the realm of chaos and death.

No coherent "water ideology" can be found in sources of prophecy, be they taken from the Hebrew Bible, Mesopotamian texts, or Greek literature, but a few recurring topics can nevertheless be identified. In biblical prophecy, water appears as the source of life and purity. Greek writers, thanks to whom we are somewhat better informed about the details of the oracular process in major Greek oracle sites, tended to associate oracles with sacred springs and the preparatory purification rites that the prophets underwent before uttering their oracles. In the case of Didyma and Claros, water also played a role as the medium of

the divine agency, making the prophets receptive to the divine word. In biblical and other Near Eastern texts, water does not appear as a part of the oracular process, except for two letters from Mari in which men and women are given a specific drink in order to obtain oracles. In addition, some Mesopotamian texts mention the function of water as a medium of supernatural agency in connection to taking an oath. Both the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian prophetic texts associate water with destructive mythological powers. Rivers in particular appear as liminal spaces, the crossing of which brings about destruction to enemies, and salvation for those under divine protection.

Water(s) of Abundance in the Ancient Near East and in Hebrew Bible Texts: A Sign of Kingship

STÉPHANIE ANTHONIOZ

Water gushing forth in Mesopotamia is the image, *par excellence*, of divine life given to humanity through the king, and the literary motif of abundance can be traced over millennia.¹ I will first review the Mesopotamian literature and show how myths of creation and royal inscriptions cannot be separated, in order to understand the theology at work, that of royal mediation: the waters that gushed forth in the beginning of creation flow continually through the king, who is responsible before the gods for that gift.² Secondly, I will endeavour to show the influence and transmission of such a motif to the West, from the royal and literary reservoir of Sumer and Akkad to the courts of Amorite Middle-Euphrates, Assyria and the Levantine coast. Thirdly, the investigation will focus on the Pentateuch with special attention to the creation narratives (Gen 1–2) where the royal mediation defining the institution of kingship in the ancient Near East seems to be brought under sharp criticism. Yhwh becomes the only king of Israel and this analysis will be pursued and clearly demonstrated in Deutero-Isaiah and other prophets.

1 This is the subject of a detailed analysis in S. Anthonioz, *L'eau, enjeux politiques et théologiques, de Sumer à la Bible* (VTSup 131; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 434–534.

2 The Flood as overflowing and destructive waters will not be studied here for two reasons. The first one is a matter of space, as it would necessitate a long development. The second reason is that the Mesopotamian sources at hand, myths as well as royal inscriptions, show that the Flood as the decision of Enlil god of winds is primarily described as a wind tempest (winds are the literary agent of this cosmic destruction more than waters). It must be added however that the Flood is also a very important motif in the Mesopotamian theology of royal mediation as the king becomes himself the flood of his god(s) so as the conquer and defeat the enemies of the empire and so preserve the original gift of life and civilization. Cf. S. Anthonioz, *L'eau, enjeux politiques et théologiques, de Sumer à la Bible*, 295–343. See also for the influence of this motif on the biblical theology of the Flood, S. Anthonioz, “À la mémoire de Jules Touzard, l’arc du déluge,” in *La Bible entre culture et foi* (ed. L. Villemain; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2012), 177–94 and “La ‘mémoire’ du déluge dans l’Orient ancien,” *Camenulae* 1 (2007): www.paris-sorbonne.fr/spip.php?article5849.

1. The Water(s) of Abundance and Mesopotamian Theology of Creation and Royal Mediation

Absence of water often characterizes Mesopotamian myths of origins at their very beginning. The myths of *Atra-hasûs* or *Enki and Ninhursag* appear in this sense as models of the genre. Lacking water is clearly the sign of no-life and this absence is the primeval crisis to be remedied:

32. « Tu as offert une ville, tu as offert une ville, mais que puis-je faire de ton don ?
33. Tu as offert Dilmun, une ville, tu as offert une ville, mais que puis-je faire de ton don ?
34. Tu as offert [...], tu as offert une ville, mais que puis-je faire de ton don ?
35. Tu as offert [une ville (?)] dont les canaux ont été laissés sans [eau (?)],
36. Tu as offert une ville que puis-je faire de ton don ? [...]
42. [Puisse Utu, qui se tient au ciel, faire sourdre l'eau douce de [...], du [...] de Nanna,
45. Des « bouches » d'où l'eau jaillit sur la terre],
46. Et en faire monter l'eau dans tes grands [...]
47. Puisse-t-il abreuver ta ville des eaux d'abondance,
48. Abreuver Dilmun des eaux d'abondance.³

And further:

- 15–19. Que l'abondance (provenant) de la vaste mer [viennne à toi (?)]. La ville : ses demeures [sont/seront] d'agréables demeures. Dilmun : ses demeures [sont/seront] d'agréables demeures. Son orge [est/sera] de l'orge fine, ses dattes [sont/seront] de grosses dattes,
- 20–21. Ses moissons [...] trois fois [...]. Ses arbres [sont/seront] des arbres [...].
- [...]
- 65–69. Lui, l'intelligent, devant Nintu, la mère du pays, Enki, l'intelligent, devant Nintu, la mère du pays, avec son pénis creuse un fossé pour l'eau, avec son pénis, fait baigner les roseaux dans l'eau, avec son pénis, fait jaillir un grand [...] vêtement *bardul*.⁴

In the first passage, the goddess Ninsikila is complaining to her father Enki, god of water, who is lying next to her, that Dilmun is useless without water. Without water the country is no gift, she says. Though the goddess complains to Enki, it is Utu the sun-god who intervenes and has the water gush forth all over Dilmun. In the second passage,

3 P. Attinger, "Enki et Ninhursagâ," *ZA* 74 (1984): 8–11.

4 *Ibid.*, 12–15.

which is part of the same prologue,⁵ the goddess is now Nintu. She receives the waters of Enki (i.e., his sperm) and has the canals of Dilmun filled and flowing. Both introductions of that one prologue therefore appear in analogy (since water and sperm are the same word in Sumerian the ideogram *a*).⁶ The absence of water is presented as the greatest evil in the country of Dilmun, which is otherwise famous for its lack of all other evil (no lion kills there, no wolf takes away any lamb, no sickness endangers humanity, and old age does not exist). The gushing forth of water thus signals the beginning of life, a life that is the greatest gift and yet one that brings in all kinds of evil at the same time. So it may be said that while life may indeed co-exist with evil, it can not exist without water.

The different myths of creation in Mesopotamia show that beyond their diversity they often end up in gushing forth water as the gift of life. This gushing forth may be represented only by the reference to the digging of canals. So it is in the *Atra-hasîs* myth where gods themselves, before the creation of humans, dig up canals for their life and the life of the country (*napišti mātīm*).⁷ In the *Lagaš Royal Chronic*, the gods give humanity “the hoe, the shovel, the basket and the plough” (*gišal gišmar giḍusu gišapin-e*) so that canals may be dug, the ground watered and the “water(s) of abundance” may gush forth (*a-ḥé-gál-la*).⁸ Even the Sumerian myth of the Flood does not begin without the mention of the earth being watered, the canals dug, and the regular flooding. The Debate Poems *Bird against Fish* or *Summer against Winter* also do not start unless water has gushed forth and the hydraulic system is in place. As an example, here is the beginning of *Summer against Winter* which is particularly interesting since the gushing forth of abundance is clearly linked to primeval temporality:

1. The Lord lifted his head in pride, bountiful days arrived.
2. Heaven and earth he regulated, and the population spread wide,
3. Enlil, like a mighty bull, placed his feet on the earth,
4. To make bountiful times of abundance,
5. To make manifest [...] nights of splendor,

5 Two different introductions have been put together to create the prologue of this myth.

6 J. Cooper, “Enki’s Member: Eros and Irrigation in Sumerian Literature,” in *Dumu-édub-ba-a: Studies in Honor of Ake W. Sjöberg* (ed. H. Behrens; Philadelphia: The University Press, 1989), 87–89.

7 Tablet I 22 and 24. All references follow the edition of W. G. Lambert, A. R. Millard, and M. Civil, *Atra-hasîs, the Babylonian Story of the Flood, with the Sumerian Flood Story* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

8 J.-J. Glassner, *Chroniques mésopotamiennes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993), 152.

6. To make legumes grow, to make weed spread out,
7. To make the carp-flood appear regularly at the quays,
8. To make the people lengthen their days in abundance,
9. To make *Emeš* bind the dikes of heaven,
10. To make *Enten* show regularly the abundant waters at the quays,
11. This was what Enlil, king of Mountainland, wanted to achieve.
12. With the great *Hursag*-hill he copulated, yes, gave that mountain her share.
13. He thus made her pregnant with *Emeš* and *Enten*, welfare and life of the Nation.⁹

The temporality of the beginning starts with the “good or bountiful days” (*ud dūg*, l.1) that are to come in summer (*emeš*) as well as in winter (*enten*). These good days are good because they are days of abundance (*ud dūg nam-ḫé-a*, l.4). This abundance is precisely defined by the myth; it is carried by the seasonal rhythm and the alternating winter and summer. At the origins, summer gives no more abundance than winter and vice-versa because each assumes its own unique role day after day, year after year, thus producing “abundance” that is “the life of the Nation or country” (*ḫé-ḡál zi kalam-ma*, l.13). And so *Emeš*, summer, is charged with establishing dwellings and have harvests fill them (l.20–21) whereas *Enten* is charged with the spring floods, abundance and life of the country (l.23), the planting of the grain and harvesting. That rhythm thus characterizes abundance in Sumer. Yet had *Emeš* and *Enten* not received from Enlil his fecundating gift, there would be no life in Sumer. So again the myth plays on the pun water / sperm. Consequently there could be no days of abundance without water(s) of abundance. The “abundance and life of the country” (*ḫé-ḡál zi kalam-ma*) is repeated over 3 times in this prologue (l.13, 23 and 27) and links the abundance of Enlil’s sperm (l.13) to the abundance of spring flooding (l.23 and 27). At the end of the prologue, one is somehow brought back to the beginning of the good days: they have now come. Time is realized in its seasonal rhythm and this rhythm is anchored in the blessing of origins. This Debate Poem is thus particularly interesting in showing how seasonal time is originally blessed in abundance. It could therefore be argued on the basis of this and other Mesopotamian texts relating to origins, that myth functions so as to make this original gushing forth that which will enable life to come into existence.

Since references to rivers and canals are so numerous in Mesopotamian myths, it is better from a pragmatic perspective, to study the par-

9 H. Vanstiphout, “The Disputation between Summer and Winter,” *COS* 1 (1997): 584–85.

ticular expression of the “water(s) of abundance” (*a-ḥé-gál-la*). The expression may be defined as a literary motif because it bears consequence on the theology of royal mediation. By motif, it is therefore meant that the expression is not only a literary *topos* (or “lieu commun”) but has a clear function within the official discourse. Let me first make clear that the expression is known by a few variations:

- The “water(s) of abundance” (*a-ḥé-gál-la*) is found as seen above in the *Lagaš Chronic* (1.25, 53), the myth *Enki and Ninhursag* (1.47–48 and 58–59) and in the Debate Poem *Summer against Winter* (1.10 and 289).
- The variant “sweet water” (*a-du₁₀*) is found in the myth of *Enki and Ninhursag* (1.42, 49 and 60), *Enlil and Ninlil* (1.7),¹⁰ *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (1.173),¹¹ *The Curse of Akkad* (1.269 and 278),¹² and in *Lugal.e* (1.341).¹³
- The variant “pure water” (*a sikil*) is found in the *Sumerian Myth of the Flood* (1.144),¹⁴ *The Travel of Nanna to Nippur* (1.325),¹⁵ *The Lamentation over Nippur* (1.277).
- The variant “flowing water” (*a-zal-le*) is found as we shall see in the myth of *Enki and the World’s Order* (1.259), *The Cylinders of Gudea* (B 25), *The lamentation over Ur* (1.270) and *The Lamentation over Nippur* (1.235).
- The variant “life giving water” (*a zi-šag₄-gál*) is found in the Debate Poem *Bird against Fish* (1.6).

If the expression “water(s) of abundance” is preferred here, it is for two reasons. First, the Sumerian etymology of abundance (*ḥé-gál*) is linked to the root of life (*gál*) which is essential in this study. Second, the expression works not only in myths but also in royal inscriptions which are essential in defining the motif and its function in the theology of royal mediation.

The gushing forth of water is, in myths of origins, as has shown already, also connected to the birth of civilization. That gift does not only serve to enhance regulations of nature but it also marks the beginning of civilization along with nature, civilization being first and foremost a

10 H. Behrens, *Enlil und Ninlil : ein sumerischer Mythos aus Nippur* (Roma: Biblical Institute, 1978).

11 J. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur, an-gim dim-ma* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1978).

12 J. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

13 J. Van Dijk, *LUGAL UD ME-LÁM-bi NIR-ĜÁL, Le récit épique et didactique des travaux de Ninurta, du déluge et de la nouvelle création: Texte, traduction et introduction* (Leiden: Brill, 1983).

14 But in the form *kù-a* and not a *sikil*.

15 A.-H. Al Fouadi, “Enki’s Journey to Nippur: The Journeys of the Gods” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1969).

matter of kingship. This is very clear, for example, in the Debate Poem *Bird against Fish*. The god Enki, after having gathered the waters to make them flow in the Tigris and Euphrates, and after bringing “the life giving water” (*a zi-šag4-gál*, l.6) via canals and irrigation, is charged with multiplying men called “the black heads” and instituting a king (*lugal*) for them. Kingship is characterized as a pastorate (*nam sipad*), and its institution crowns the work of creation: sheepfolds and stables (*tùr amaš*), shepherds and cattlemen (*sipad unud*), cities and villages (*iri á-dam*), marshes (*ambar-ambar*) and lagoons (*pú umah*). All of these form Sumer’s horizon where nature and civilization develop in perfect harmony according to the order of creation maintained through the royal mediation. Culture is almost the state of nature, *as self-evident and eternal as anything in the world* according to the lapidary formulation of A. Westenholz and U. Koch-Westenholz.¹⁶ Creation is not just limited to cosmogony, theogony or anthropogony, creation is the world in order and regulated through its institutions (agriculture, industry, society, religion, and royal mediation).¹⁷

The myth of *Enki and the World Order* certainly shows best the ways in which the water(s) of abundance is (are) essential to civilization and the organization of cities and countries. The notion of abundance as a motif can easily be traced to Enki himself is *en-hé-gál-la*, “lord of abundance,”¹⁸ who has [*silim-]ma hé-gál ki bí-ib-ús*, “established the foundations in abundance” (l.21), who proclaims himself *hé-gál-šu-du-me-en*, to “be the one of abundance” (l.71), who allows abundant rains from the skies (l.90) and makes abundance shine in the heaven and on the earth (l.90.266) and flow from the temple as oil (l.360). H. Vanstiphout has analysed this myth and underlined the function of water in the socio-economical organization of Sumer.¹⁹ The countries that Enki reviews are from East to West and place Ur and Sumer at the centre of a vast maritime and fluvial organization. He underlines then how water,

16 A. Westenholz and U. Koch-Westenholz, “Enkidu: The Noble Savage?,” in *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W. G. Lambert* (ed. I. Finkel and A. George; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 438.

17 And so C. Westermann remarked: “The biblical primeval story has given very little attention to talk about human civilization, and even less to its theological significance. (...) In Sumer it is from the genealogy of the gods that civilization and its benefits take their origin; in the Bible it is from the genealogy of the human race. It is human endeavour and not ‘divine birth’ that gives rise to civilization.” Cf. Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (trans. J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 60.

18 C. A. Benito, “Enki and Ninmah and, Enki and the World Order” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1969), 85.

19 H. Vanstiphout, “Why did Enki Organize the World?” in *Sumerian Gods and their Representations* (ed. I. Finkel; Groningen: Styx, 1997), 117–35.

when mastered and regulated through canals but also commerce, is source of life and civilization. The crowning of such an organization is nothing but a realm of peace. The organization is also cultic since Enki's trip is at the same time a ritual of benediction (and may thus have been part of a temple liturgy). As Enki enters his *makurru*-boat and starts his journey from land to land, he begins blessing them. So the journey has an outward movement as well as an inward movement: Enki goes away in giving blessing but comes back filled with the riches of the lands visited and blessed (stones, precious materials). It is no wonder, then, that the myth begins and ends in the temple from where the boat departs and then returns. Water, as it gushes forth in the origin and as it is regulated, may thus be said to be the sign of life and civilization.

The theology of mediation, the king mediating, and being responsible for that original gift of life, may be seen in the last testimony of Mesopotamian civilization, the account of the *Babylonaca*, written down by Berossus a priest of Bel from Chaldean origin in the time of Alexander the Great.²⁰ The work of the *Babylonaca* is lost today and known only from fragments of Cornelius Alexander Polyhistor, himself cited in the *Chronica* of Eusebius of Caesarea that is in the fourth century CE. However, it is clear according to Berossus that civilization is not the gift of human history, as would be the case in Greece, but the original gift of creation as it is brought by Oannes the man-fish²¹ accompanied by the divine sages *apkallu*.²² Let us briefly recall the structure of the *Babylonaca*:

- Autobiographical preface
- Book I, Babylonian geography

20 S. Burstein, *The Babylonaca of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena, 1978), 5.

21 From the Sumerian *u-an(na)*, (akk. *um-anu*). Cf. M. Streck, "Oannes," *RIA* 10 (2003): 1–3; E. Reiner, "The Etiological Myth of the Seven Sages," *Or* 30 (1961): 1–11.

22 These sages are known from a royal list of Uruk (dating to the second century BCE) adding to the seven antediluvian kings seven sages *abgal* = *apkallu* (U-An, U-An-dugga, Enmedugga, Enmegalamma, Enmebulugga, An-Enlilda, Utuabzu). This list continues after the flood with the names of king accompanied by those of their scribes / sages (*ummannu*). Cf. J. Van Dijk, "Die Inschriftenfunde," XVIII. *vorläufiger Bericht über die von dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut und der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft unternommenen Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka* (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1962), 44. Other allusions to the seven sages are known from the myth of *Erra* (I 162), from *Maqlû Incantations* (II 124, V 110, VII 49), from *Gilgameš* I i 19, XI 305), and from other fragments found in Aššurbanipal's library. Cf. R. Borger, "Die Beschwörungsserie *Bit Mēseri* und die Himmelfahrt Henochs," *JNES* 33 (1974): 183–96 translated into English in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11* (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 224–33.

- Description of man in the state of nature
- Oannes, divine messenger, sent to king Alorus
- Revelation which content is nothing but a paraphrase of *Enûma eliš*
- Book II, list of ten antediluvian kings
- Flood
- List of postdiluvian kings
- Book III, list of kings from Nabû-nâsir to Alexander

One may recognize the familiar structure of the Flood myth, but Creation is distinguished from civilization and necessitates a revelation, which is unfamiliar to Mesopotamian myths of creation. As noticed by S. Burstein, the narrative is resolutely ahistorical. Its aim is to underline the continuity of Oannes' revelation for which kingship is responsible from age to age. For Oannes revealed arts and sciences, but also the foundation of cities, cults, laws, measures and agriculture. And from the beginning on, nothing has been added; all has been given. Kings and sages are thus responsible for transmitting that original gift of creation.²³

Water(s) of abundance is (are) consequently a major motif: it is the gift of life, gushing forth from creation, for the life of the civilization, and mediated through cult and kingship. Therefore it is not surprising to have the motif function in the vast corpus of royal inscriptions. It is, for example, well developed in the Cylinders of Gudea where abundance is linked to the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates (*ididigina idburanun^{ki}-bi-da hé-ĝál du-du-àm*).²⁴ Canals of the time are even named after abundance and are attested by inscriptions such as the canal Babaĝegal, literally "Baba / Ba'u is abundance" in the time of Ur-Ba'u (ca. 2150).²⁵ Names are also attested later during the Ur III period with the canals Šulgiĝegal,²⁶ "Šulgi is abundance" and Šūsînĝegal,²⁷ "Šu-Sîn is abun-

23 "(...) the period before the Flood was the 'history of revelation' in Babylonian theology. In this period, the basis for all later knowledge was laid. Writings originating in this period would accordingly have a special authority... the history which follows is the time when this revelation is transmitted and unfolded. Accordingly, the role of the scholars can be defined as that of the transmitters and unfolders of *received wisdom*; they were the human successors of semidivine sages, whom they emulated but would and could not surpass in wisdom." Cf. S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (SAA 10; Helsinki: The University Press, 1993), xviii.

24 Cylinder B, col. xvii, 10–11, cf. D. O. Edzard, *Gudea and his Dynasty* (RIME 3/1, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), E3/1.1.7.

25 D. O. Edzard and G. Farber, *Die Orts und Gewässernamen der Zeit der 3. Dynastie von Ur* (RGTC 2; Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1974), 257; A. Falkenstein, *Die Inschriften Gudeas von Lagaš. Einleitung* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1966), 7.

26 Edzard and Farber, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, 290.

27 *Ibid.*, 291.

dance.” Interesting indeed is the fact that these last two canals no longer bear a divine but a royal name so that it makes clear that as mediators, kings bring in the water(s) of life to their cities. In the same vein, in his royal hymn Šulgi king of Ur proclaims himself “king of abundance.”²⁸ Therefore the motif of abundance can be said to be the sign of the theology of royal mediation in Mesopotamia: it can be traced over a very long period of time and all through the Paleo-Babylonian period (first half of the second millennium BCE).

And this theology is expressed in a particular way when kings proclaim themselves “canals of abundance.” The most famous example is the inscription of Hammurabi commemorating the building of the Babylonian canal “Hammurabi-is-the-abundance-of-the-people”:

- 1-3. Hammurabi, mighty king, king of Babylon,
- 4-5. king who makes the four quarters be at peace,
- 6-7. who achieves the victory of the god Marduk,
- 8-9. shepherd who contents him.
- 10-13. When the gods Anum and Enlil gave to me the land of Sumer and Akkad to rule,
- 14-16. (and) entrusted their nose-rope into my hands,
- 17-20. I dug the canal Hammurabi-is-the-abundance-of-the-people, which brings abundant water to the land of Sumer and Akkad.
- 21-22. I turned both its banks into cultivated areas,
- 23-24. I kept heaping up piles of grain,
- 25-27. I provided perpetual water, for the land of Sumer and Akkad.
- 28-31. (and) gathered the scattered peoples of the land of Sumer and Akkad,
- 32-33. (and) provided for them pastures and watering places,
- 34-35. In abundance and plenty I shepherded them.
- 36-37. I settled them in peaceful abodes.²⁹

Royal mediation is here accentuated by the image of the shepherd (*rē'û*), which is also very familiar in contemporaneous inscriptions.³⁰ However its meaning here is twofold as Hammurabi is not only the shepherd of his people but also of the god Marduk (*rē'û muṭīb libbišu*). Therefore, the king is truly the “canal of abundance” between his god and his people just as he is their shepherd. The abundance and pleni-

28 J. Klein, *The Royal Hymns of Šulgi King of Ur: Man's Quest for Immortal Fame* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981), 11–25.

29 D. Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)* (RIME 4; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), E4.3.6.7.

30 Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)*, inscriptions of Enlil-bâni (1860–1837) E4.1.10.2, 1.1–2; E4.1.10.3, 1.1–2 and E4.1.10.5, 1.6–7; of Ammi-ditana (1683–1647) E4.3.9.2, 1.19'–25'; and Sîn-kâšid (Uruk) E4.4.1.15, 1.4–5.

tude of waters belong also as a consequence to the sheep gathered in confidence. The list of kings having proclaimed themselves “canal of abundance” or “source of abundance” is impressive:

- *šulgihegal*, “Šulgi is abundance,”³¹
- *šūsinhegal*, “Šu-Sîn is abundance,”³²
- *íd da-mi-iq-i-lí-šu* with the variant *íd hé-ġál*, “the canal Damiq-ilišu / canal of abundance,”³³
- *īsu-mu-la-èl-hé-ġál*, “the canal Sûmû-la-El-is-abundance,”³⁴
- *īa-pil-āsin-hé-ġál*, “the canal Apil-Sîn-is-abundance,”³⁵
- *īha-am-mu-ra-pí-hé-ġál*, “the canal Hammurabi-is-abundance,”³⁶
- *īsa-am-su-i-lu-na-(lugal)-na-qá-ab-nu-uḫ-ši*, “the canal king-Samsu-iluna-is-source-of-abundance,”³⁷
- *īam-mi-ša-du-qá-nu-ḫu-uš-ni-ši*, “the canal Ammi-šaduqa-is-the-abundance-of-the-people.”³⁸

The king is mediator for his people and for the life of his people so that the royal function is much richer than the simple *do ut des* to which it has often been assimilated. What is at hand concerns the original divine gift given in creation, and civilization that needs to be perpetuated in and through the king’s person and function. The cycle and transmission are eternal from the first moment as long as the king remains obedient and a true canal of this abundance. This is again clear from the inscription of Rîm-Sîn (1822–1763):

- 6-7. (Anu, Enlil, Enki and Ninmah) [gra]nted [a reign] of ab[undance] with unceasing water.
8. [Perpe]tual water, the allotment of the nation,
- 9-10. [water] which the Tigris and Euphrates had brought from ancient times,
11. and which had never ceased.³⁹

Two elements place this inscription in its beginning at the borderline of mythology. The association of the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates (*[a] īridigna īburanun-na-bi-da*) is more common to myths than royal inscrip-

31 Edzard and Farber, *Die Orts und Gewässernamen*, 290.

32 Ibid., 291.

33 M. Sigrist, *Isin Year Names* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1988), 39.

34 M. Horsnell, *The Year-Names of the First Dynasty of Babylon* (Hamilton: McMaster University Press, 1999), 60.

35 Ibid., 80.

36 Ibid., 114, 146.

37 Ibid., 179–82, 217.

38 Ibid., 345.

39 Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)*, E4.2.14.15.

tions. And the expression *u4-ul-lí-a-ta*, “since those days / since remote days” is nothing less than the incipit of numerous myths of creation. Therefore the inscription clearly expresses the link between the time of origin and the time of the king and helps understand what is mediated: the original gift of life divine through the king.

So it becomes clear at the end of this Mesopotamian review that the water(s) of abundance is (are) not just a poetic expression or literary *topos*. As a motif, it bears consequence on the theology of creation and royal mediation. Waters gushing forth in abundance in the primeval time of creation continue to flow for the life of the people and civilization through the king. The motif is part of the royal discourse and seems essential to the understanding of what royal mediation means in the ancient Near East.

2. Transmission of the Motif of the Water(s) of abundance to the West

This motif and its function within royal theology is also attested well beyond Sumer and Akkad, testimonies of it can be found in the middle Euphrates region even though the ecological system is different from South Mesopotamia. The kingdom of Mari is articulated alongside the rivers Euphrates and Habur. But their flow at this point is irregular and often not enough. One may emphasize the exceptional and highly technical work of canalizations making of Mari a new city.⁴⁰ Built over the Holocene terrace to escape annual flooding, the city is equipped with four canals, one of them connected to the Euphrates to allow access to the port. Though epigraphic sources are meagre concerning these works, one king does however glorify himself with them, Yahdun-Lîm (1815–1798). From Bedouin origin, “king of Mari and of the country of the Bensimalites,” Yahdun-Lîm extends his domination from the mouth of the Balih to the kingdom of Ešnunna. In that context, he proclaims:

- 1-5. Yahdun-Lîm, son of Yaggid-Lîm, king of Mari, Tuttul, and the land of Hana,
- 6-8. mighty king, who controls the banks of the Euphrates,
- 9-10. The god Dagan proclaimed my kingship,
- 11-14. (and) gave to me a mighty weapon that fells my royal enemies.
- 15-18. Seven kings, leaders of Hana who had fought against me, I defeated,

40 J.-C. Margueron, “Mari ou la naissance d’une ville neuve,” in *Cités disparues* (ed. M. Baud; Paris: Autrement, 1991), 133–42.

- 19-20. I annexed their lands.
 21-23. I removed the ... of the banks of the Euphrates
 24-25. and made my land dwell in peace.
 26-27. I opened canals
 28-30. and did away with the drawing of water in my land.
 31-32. I built the wall of Mari and dug its moat.
 33-34. I built the wall of Terqa and dug its moat.
 35-40. Now in a waste, a land of thirst, in which from days of old no king
 had built a city,
 41-43. I took pleasure in building a city.
 44-46. I dug its moat [and] called it Dûr-Yahdun-Lîm,
 47-49. I opened a canal for it and called it Išîm-Yahdun-Lîm / Yahdun-
 Lîm-has-determined-(its)-destiny.⁴¹

As remarked by J.-M. Durand, two points are striking in this inscription.⁴² First of all, irrigation is but one means of watering, the other being the bucket, that is, the digging of wells (l.28–30). The other point is the evident Babylonian influence concerning the rhetoric of the inscription as the king appears as victorious, a great builder and irrigator. The insistence on the motif is particularly obvious with the repetition of the verbal roots of digging (l.32.34 and 44) and opening canals (l.26.47). This great royal work is linked to abundance only indirectly: the name of the canal Išîm-Yahdun-Lîm, that is Yahdun-Lîm-has-determined-(its)-destiny. In digging that canal, the king makes himself somehow the creator and builder of his city, the mediator of its destiny. This influence seems all the more remarkable as Mari has no tradition of royal inscriptions commemorating kings' great works.

The influence of this motif may also be traced in the empire of Aššur. Though again hydrology and geography are different in the northern kingdom, as rains there allow for agriculture, it is remarkable how Assyrian kings have endeavoured to commemorate works of canalization and have done so from the earliest period. Aššur-uballit I (14th century) thus proclaims:

1. Aššur-uballit,
2. Vice-regent of the god Aššur,
3. Son of Eriba-Adad,
4. (who was) also vice-regent of the god Aššur.
5. When the god Aššur, my lord,
6. the canal-of-abundance

41 Frayne, *Old Babylonian Period* (2003–1595 BC), E4.6.8.1.

42 J.-M. Durand, "La maîtrise de l'eau dans les régions centrales du Proche-Orient," *Annales Histoire, Sciences sociales* 57 (2002): 567–68.

7. bearer of abundance
8. and plenty,
9. allowed me to construct it (...).⁴³

The motif of abundance, the use of typical expressions, and the sense of accumulation in the lexical field (*tuhdu*, *hegallu* written ideographically *hé-ġál* and *nuḥṣu* written ideographically *hé-nun*) would make a perfect example of Babylonian rhetoric if the king was not Assyrian. However some differences are to be underlined, the technical side of the work is often given more attention to which would be consistent with the development and interest in techniques of the time.⁴⁴ Adad-nêrârî I (1307–1275), for example, reports with precision the works realized in the capital of Aššur,⁴⁵ the dimensions of the dike (from the door Ea-šarru at the entrance of the upper city to the door of the Tigris in the lower side), the reasons for the work (constant inundations), the nature of the work done (upholding the dike with bitumen and bricks), and innumerable details (the thickness of the dike four bricks and a half exactly, the origin of the materials used, limestone and mortar from the city Ubasê). Other inscriptions are however more simple and associate the digging of canals with other great works such as the rebuilding of temples.⁴⁶

Certainly it is with Aššurnāṣirpal II (883–859) in Kalhu-Nimrud, and then the Sargonids (Sargon in Khorsabad or Sennacherib in Nineveh)⁴⁷ that the empire of Aššur, with uttermost splendour, rebuilds and expands its hydraulic systems.⁴⁸ The motif of abundance is not lacking.

43 A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115)* (RIMA 1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), A.0.73.3. See also the inscription from Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244–1208), A.0.78.24, 1.49–53.

44 S. Dalley has proposed that in the Assyrian mood of modernization the qanat from Anatolian inspiration had been invented. Cf. S. Dalley, "Water Management in Assyria from the 9th to the 7th century BC," *Aram Periodical* 13–14 (2001–2002): 450–58.

45 Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115)*, A.0.76.8.

46 A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC (1114–859)* (RIMA II; Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1991), A.0.78.22; A.0.96.2001.

47 From the city Bavian-Khinnis more than 50 km North-East of Nineveh, water flows through the aqueduct of Jerwan (280 km long and 22 m large) to arrive in Nineveh at the point of the palace exterior garden. Other canals feed the fields and fruit gardens to the North whereas a marsh was created to face eventual flooding.

48 A. Bagg, *Assyrische Wasserbauten: landwirtschaftliche Wasserbauten im Kernland Assyriens zwischen der 2. Hälfte des 2. und der 1. Hälfte des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (Mainz am Rhein: Verl. Philipp von Zabern, 2000).

An inscription from Aššurnāširpal II palace concerning a newly dug canal restored later on by Assarhaddon (680–669)⁴⁹ makes this clear:

- 36. I dug out a canal from the Upper Zab,
- 37. cutting through a mountain at its peak, (and) called it canal-of-abundance.
- 38. I irrigated the meadows of the Tigris (and) planted orchards in its environs
- 39-40a. with all kind of fruit trees. I pressed wine (and) offered first-fruit offerings to Aššur, my lord, and the temples of my land (...).⁵⁰

After enumerating all forty species of plants brought back from military campaigns, the king ends with the poetic line: “Streams of water (as numerous) as the stars of heaven flow in the pleasure garden.” To the god Aššur, the city and its works are dedicated. Somehow the originality of the inscription surpasses the genre, as the garden becomes the symbol of abundance in the empire, a microcosm of the whole world known to the king.

One has to admit, however, that the motif of the water(s) of abundance in the Assyrian corpus is more limited and thus singular. It is attested only in the inscriptions of a few great kings, those who have held a role in founding the empire (Aššur-uballiṭ I) or in expanding it (Tukultî-Ninurta I, Aššurnāširpal II, Sennacherib). As the Assyrian empire built itself in imitation and opposition to Babylon, this borrowing of a rhetorical model is not surprising. Therefore, we may again at this point underline how the motif of the “water(s) of abundance” functions at the heart of royal mediation in Mesopotamian theology, both Babylonian and Assyrian: as a canal of abundance, the king is responsible for allowing those waters of life to flow, creation and civilization gushed forth in the beginning of time. This will now enable us to step into HB texts and analyse whether or not the motif is still at work.

3. Radical Transformation and Theological Renewal in ancient Israelite Texts: Yhwh as king alone

Since it is clear that the motif is anchored in the theology of creation, Gen 1–2 will be the first subject of research. As often noticed, the creation narratives in Genesis offer two different landscapes in which paral-

49 R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Assarhaddons Königs Assyrien* (Graz: Im Selbstverlage des Herausgebers, 1956) 35–36.

50 Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC (1114–859)*, A.O.101.30.

lels and differences are evident.⁵¹ The three main parallels are: Gen 1:1 // Gen 2:4b, God creates heaven and earth; Gen 1:2 // Gen 2:5–6, the earth is empty and lifeless; Gen 1:11–12 // Gen 2:8–9; Gen 1:24–25 // Gen 2:18–20; Gen 1:26–28 // Gen 2:7, 21–23, God creates the plants animals and man. The two main differences are:

- Gen 1 offers a primeval landscape made of waters and darkness whereas Gen 2 opens up in a desert lacking water,⁵²
- In Gen 1, God creates by his word according to a weekly schedule whereas in Gen 2 God fashions human and animals as a potter and only then creates for them a setting to live in.

On a cosmological level, though both prologues may be paralleled, one has to admit the obvious antinomy: in Gen 1 all is water at the beginning but in Gen 2 there is not a drop of it. Moreover, the process of creation in Gen 1 will lead to the separation of waters and their gathering in order to let the earth, literally the dry one, appear. This is not so in Gen 2 where rain is at first wanting (Gen 2:5) and where only then a small source gushes forth (Gen 2:6) to become a strong river watering all the earth (Gen 2:10–14). The situation in Gen 2 seems to be remedied all the more so because the name of Eden refers to an abundance of water according to the etymology of the West-Semitic root *ʿDN attested both in Ugaritic and Aramaean.⁵³ So Eden becomes a well-watered place, a place abounding in waters.⁵⁴ Indeed, Eden's hydrology is rich

51 J.-L. Ska, "Creation and Salvation (Gn 1–3)," *Sijon* 9 (1997): 22.

52 J.-L. Ska, "Séparation des eaux et de la terre ferme dans le récit sacerdotal," *NRT* 103 (1981): 520; H. Gunkel already analysed: "The points of departure for J and P differ greatly. There, water is present at first, here, there is dry land – the earth was originally a waterless desert. There water is the enemy, here the friend. Gen 2:5 indicates how the narrator envisions the current status of the world: every thing depends on the rain, from which, nowadays, all fertility on earth derives. These descriptions in P and J refer to very different climates: in the former the climate of a flooded alluvial land, here the climate of a land which groans in late summer under drought until the deity grants the fervently desired rain and thus creates the whole world anew. This is the climate of the Syro-Arabian desert, northern Mesopotamia, Syria and Canaan." Cf. H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997, trans. M. Biddle of *Genesis*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901) 4–5.

53 See the bilingual inscription of Tell Fekherye, l. 4–5, and A. R. Millard, "Eden, Bit Adini and Beth Eden," *EI* 24 (1993): 174*–175*; "The Etymology of Eden," *VT* 34 (1984): 103–6; R. Hess, "Eden – A Well-Watered Place," *Biblical Review* 7 (1991): 28–33.

54 "In light of the above, we may suggest that ʿeden means 'a place where there is abundant water-supply'; its verbal root ʿDN means primarily 'to make abundant in water-supply' and secondarily 'to enrich, prosper, make luxuriant.' The term ʿeden (pl. ʿadānīm in Ps 36:9), which means 'pleasure, luxury,' has the same etymology as Eden with this secondary meaning." Cf. D. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Re-*

with a four-headed river (ארבעה ראשים) that waters all the earth. The symbolic four-headed river reminds one of Mesopotamian cosmology, where the earth is symbolized by *kibrāt erbetti*, “four shores.” Royal ideology is also connected to it, as one of the king’s titles is *šar kibrāt erbetti*, “king of the four shores” and by the metonymy “king of the four quarters” that is, of all the earth. The biblical Eden seems therefore to espouse the Mesopotamian cosmology and royal ideology studied above as water is gushing forth in abundance to give life to the earth and to humanity. Yet one has to admit that in Eden humanity is placed as the king of creation,⁵⁵ and that civilization is not given in the primeval time.

A closer analysis of Gen 2 seems to indicate more divergences. The passage of Gen 2:10–14, the dividing of the four-headed river, may be summed up as follows:

1. Gen 2:10, The River → Eden → irrigation of the garden (הגן) and division of the river in four heads
2. Gen 2:11–12, The *Pišōn* → the country of Havila (כל־ארץ החוילה) → surrounds the country rich in gold and precious stones
3. Gen 2:13, The *Gihōn* → the country of Kúš (כל־ארץ כוש) → surrounds the country
4. Gen 2:14, The Tigris → Aššur → goes to the East of Aššur (קדמת אשור)
5. Gen 2:14, The Euphrates

Being the last of the four rivers, the Euphrates is left without country to surround and supply with water. If, as argued by T. Stordalen, the *Pišōn* represents the ensemble Red Sea / Persian Gulf (that is the South-East quarter of the world), the *Gihōn*, the Nile (that is the South-West quarter), the Tigris, the North-East and the Euphrates the North-West,⁵⁶ then it must be admitted that the Euphrates is left lonely at the end of the enumeration. I would suggest that it is the earth that it is supposed

appraisal of the Chaotikampf Theory in the Old Testament (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 125.

55 A. Schüle, “Made in the Image of God: The Concepts of Divine Images in Gen 1–3,” *ZAW* 117 (2005): 1–19; J. D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama and Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 114–15; D. Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 53–103.

56 “Contemplating the image in Gen 2:10–14 we are bound to realise that the נהר in Gen 2:10, having watered the garden, runs into and indeed forms that cosmic ocean—perhaps conceivable for a river emerging from luxurious עֵדֶן. The four cosmic rivers then take their ‘head’ from various parts of this cosmic ‘river.’ This image fits the overall scheme of Gen 2:10–14, explaining why the four rivers could extend from the four cosmic corners and still be thought to carry the same water.” Cf. T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Gn 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in the Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 285.

to surround and that its waters have been lost. Could this Edenic and Transeuphratean country be the land of Israel lost in exile? The absence of divinely instituted kingship would therefore point to the royal failure to transmit and guarantee the primeval gift of life. This is all the more possible as the Sumero-Akkadian etymology *edin* / *edinu* points not to water(s) of abundance but, on the contrary, to places in the margins of cities often lacking water. Could this be a pun or more than a pun, the result of a scribe's ability to play on languages and etymologies? And to offer a cryptic theology? The place of Eden and abundance of water(s) also becomes and is from the beginning, a place where water is lacking. If the motif functions in Mesopotamia as that for the gift of life, creation and civilization, it is therefore clear in these opening chapters that such mythology and its theology of royal mediation is deconstructed. In Gen 1, water never gushes forth in abundance and in Gen 2, not only is the name of Eden controversial in itself, but humanity is soon to be excluded from the garden of Eden and wander from East to East in a land lacking more and more water:

- Gen 2:8, a garden in Eden in the East (גֶּן־עֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם)
- Gen 2:14, East of Aššur (קִדְמַת אַשּׁוּר)
- Gen 3:24, East of the garden of Eden (מִקֶּדֶם לְגֶן־עֵדֶן)
- Gen 4:16, East of Eden (בְּאַרְצ־נוֹד קִדְמַת־עֵדֶן)
- Gen 11:2, Eastward (וַיֵּהִי בִנְסַעֲם מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְּקֶעֶה בְּאַרְצֵי שְׁנַעַר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם)

Humanity is thus carried away from Eden and its abundance, eastward. It should be added to this analysis that the initial crisis of the lack of rain (Gen 2:5) is never again addressed in the primeval history of Israel.

It seems however, that connections may be made beyond that history and the narratives of the origins are not without links with other texts, especially legal ones. For rain is the gift of God in the Deuteronomic laws of the Pentateuch, but a gift measured only by humanity's obedience:

For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden.¹¹ But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven,¹² a land for which Yhwh your God cares; the eyes of Yhwh your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year.¹³ It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love Yhwh your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul,¹⁴ that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.¹⁵ He will give grass in your

fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.¹⁶ Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them¹⁷. Or the anger of Yhwh will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land, which Yhwh is giving you. (Deut 11:10–17)

The blessing of the earth and the abundance of water(s) are openly linked to obedience. The double crisis analysed in Gen 2 seems therefore to be given here its answer and remedy. With obedience comes the regulation of nature with seasonal rains, the autumn rain (יורה), and the spring rain (ומלקוש). This blessing of abundance is nothing else but the blessing of obedience resumed in the final appeal of Deut 28:12 whereas disobedience brings the curses of a “bronze heaven” and of an “iron earth” (Deut 28:23). In this sense, blessings and curses in Lev 26 are very similar to these Deuteronomic laws and rain even comes as the first blessing.

Deutero-Isaiah, rich in a renewed theology of creation, in many instances, corroborates this view. But water becomes very plainly the sign of the kingship of Yhwh. It is noteworthy to notice that all the occurrences concerning water that will be reviewed next are all part of secondary layers in the redaction of the book.⁵⁷ Let us now review these occurrences and point out their originality:

1. Yhwh appears to be the one to open rivers in the desert and make water gush forth for life (אפתח על־שפיים נהרות ובתוך בקעות מעינות אשים מדבר לאגמ־מים), “I will open rivers on the bare heights and springs in the midst of valleys, I will turn the desert into watery marsh and dry ground into gushing waters,” 41:18). Yhwh is also the one to satiate man’s thirst (לא ירעבו ולא יצמאו ולא יכמם שרב ושמש כ־מרחמם ינהגם ועל־מבועי מים ינהלם), “They shall hunger and thirst no longer, neither heat nor sun shall

57 It has usually been argued that the first layer, a collection of prophetic oracles dating back to the time of Cyrus, could be traced in Isa 40–48 (40:9, 11; 40:12–41:5*; 41:21–29*; 42:5–7*; 43:14; 44:24–28*; 45:1–7*; 45:11–13*; 46:9–11*; 48:12–15*) + 52:7–10 for some authors. Cf. J. Vermeylen, “L’unité du livre d’Isaïe,” *The Book of Isaiah = Le Livre d’Isaïe : les oracles et leurs relectures, unité et complexité de l’ouvrage* (BETL 81; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 36–41; U. Berges, *Jesaja 40 – 48 übersetzt und ausgelegt* (Freiburg im Breisgau Basel and Wien, 2008); *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* (Freiburg im Breisgau Basel & Wien, 1998) 322; R. Albertz, “Darius in Place of Cyrus: The First Edition of Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40.1–52.12) in 521 BCE,” *JSOT* 27 (2003): 371–83; R. G. Kratz, *Kyros im Deuterojesaja-Buch: religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen und Theologie von Jes 40–55* (FAT 1; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991), 175; O. H. Steck, *Gottesknecht und Zion: Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Deuterojesaja* (FAT 4; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 155–60.

strike them, for he who has mercy on them will lead them and bring them to sources of water," 49:10, see further 55:1).

2. But the divine power is not only life giving. It can become in other instances a source of death: as Yhwh has the power to create, he also has the power to dry up waters and to therefore "decreate" (אֶחָרִיב הַיָּמִים וְגִבְעוֹת) "I will lay waste mountains and hills, all their herbage I will dry up, I will turn rivers into isles and marshes I will dry up," 42:15, see further 44:27).
3. Naturally Yhwh's power over water is related to the Exodus' departure from Egypt and the drying or opening the sea of Reeds (43:16–21; 55:9–11), leading his people from death to life. But the motif of the way opened up in the sea is evidently transformed by Deutero-Isaiah: the way opened up is nothing but rivers of water opened up (אֵפֶן אֲשִׁים בַּמִּדְבָּר) "Yea I make a way in the desert, in the wasteland rivers!" 43:19b).
4. And the transformation of the motif is even more expanded; water gushing forth is paralleled with the spirit of God (כִּי אֶצְקֶימָם עַל־צִמְאון וְנוֹלִים) "For I will pour water on thirsty (ground) and streams on the dry land, I will pour my spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your produce," 44:3) as well as with the word of God (55:10–11), and finally the Torah (וַיְהִי כְנָהר) "Would you hearken to my commands, your welfare would be like a river, your justice like the waves of the sea!," 48:18). Law seems therefore to be hidden in the sign of water.
5. Finally, all the references to the motif of water in Deutero-Isaiah point to the passage mentioning Eden (51:3–4) in which Yhwh declares that the law (that is the Torah) shall gush forth from him (כִּי תֵרָא מֵאֵת תִּצָּא). The intra-biblical exegesis over Gen 2–3 is therefore in accordance with the Deuteronomic view: Yhwh is not only God and king, he is also the one lawgiver and God's law is the only life-giving water. The intra-biblical exegesis could also be broadened to Exod 15:22–27 and even more to 17:1–7 where water gushes forth from the rock in the desert (וַיֵּצֵאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מַיִם, Exod 17:6). In both cases, at Marah and Rephidim, the gift of water is connected with obedience to the divine law. Therefore it seems now possible to look at the name of Horeb (חֲרִיב), where the Torah is given, as a type of midrash on one of the roots meaning desert⁵⁸ and repeatedly used in Deutero-Isaiah (42:15, 44:27, 50:2, 51:10). It is also significant that as Sinai is the most frequent name in the Pentateuch to refer to the mountain of God where the Torah is given,⁵⁹ Horeb is used

58 O. Kaiser, "חֲרִיב," *TDOT* 5:151; L. Peritt, "Sinai und Horeb," *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie. Festschrift W. Zimmerli* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 302–22.

59 Exod 16:1; 19:1, 2, 11, 18, 20, 23; 24:16; 31:18; 34:2, 4, 29, 32; Lev 7:38; 25:1; 26:46; 27:34; Num 1:1, 19; 3:1, 4, 14; 9:1, 5; 10:12; 26:64; 28:6; 33:14, 16; Deut 33:2.

in meaningful instances and particularly those concerned with the gift of water in the desert. Noteworthy is the fact that most occurrences belong to Deuteronomy.⁶⁰

So the analysis that started from the creation narratives to the Deuteronomic law in the Pentateuch, the gift of life-giving water gushing forth from obedience to divine law, finds its poetic and prophetic fulfilment in the words of Deutero-Isaiah. It is consequently no wonder that, according to Deutero-Isaiah, the Torah was made great and glorious by Yhwh for his chosen people (42:21) and yet was rejected and not listened to (42:24). The exilic and postexilic Deuteronomistic judgement is also at work there and exile is clearly the punishment for the disobedience to the law (see in detail 42:22–25). This divine retribution is also linked to the first “sin” (אֲבִיךָ הָרָשָׁוֹן חָטָא וּמְלִיצִיךָ פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי, Isa 43:27 // Gen 3) and to the flood’s destruction (לֹא־יִכָּרֵת וְלֹא־יִשְׁמַד שְׁמוֹ מִלְּפָנַי, 48:19b // Gen 9:11). Therefore the prophet reviewing Israel’s history, in accordance with Deuteronomistic law, is transforming the motif into a sign of divine kingship. Only God is said to be king in Deutero-Isaiah (“king of Jacob” 41:21, “king of Israel” 44:6, “your king” 43:15). And far from putting an end to Israel’s history, the prophet opens up a new way: as the human kingship comes to an end,⁶¹ divine kingship can be all the more reaffirmed and grounded on new theological grounds.

The redefinition of the motif at work is clearly an attempt to understand Israel’s past but even more so to look to the future and offer Israel a renewed political as well as theological identity. To do this, Deutero-Isaiah makes use of many sources, both intra- and extra-biblical. For example, P. Hanson has pointed out how Deutero-Isaiah was indebted to former prophecy.⁶² T. Römer has demonstrated how the different traditions of Israel’s past were reconciled in Deutero-Isaiah⁶³ and

60 Exod 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Deut 1:2, 6, 19; 4:10, 15; 5:2; 9:8; 18:16; 29:1.

61 If some hope was put in Cyrus, it is clear that it was soon to be disappointed. Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, “Second Isaiah –Prophet of Universalism,” *JSTOT* 41 (1988): 90–91.

62 “There is much truth in the claim that Yahwism survived the loss of nationhood, the destruction of Temple, and the incalculable human shame and suffering of this period in no small part due to earlier prophetic tradition. Second Isaiah could argue that this calamity did not disprove Yahweh’s might or mercy precisely because he could assume knowledge of the judgment prophecies of the preexilic prophets (see Isa 42:24–25). And in the wake of Second Isaiah there arose devoted disciples who relied primarily on the classical prophetic writings, and especially on the oracles of judgment against Israel, as a key to their own experiences.” Cf. P. D. Hanson, “Israelite Religion in the Early Postexilic Period,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 487–88.

63 T. Römer, “Monothéisme et réconciliation en Esaïe 40–55,” *Cahier biblique de Foi et Vie* 43 (1994): 67–83.

C. Broyles has shown also the influence of different psalms on Deutero-Isaiah.⁶⁴ The redefinition, as stated, tends not only to grasp the past but also to look to the future. It concerns not only Israel's identity but also Yhwh's divine identity because Israel's identity is founded in its understanding of Yhwh. It is the reason why the manner of naming God is of particular interest in Deutero-Isaiah⁶⁵; he is God (אל, 40:18; 43:10, 12; 45:14, 15, 21, 22; 46:9) and no one can compare with him (ואל-מי תדמיון אל, 40:18a). The plural form אלהים is also recurring (40:1, 3, 8, 9, 27; 41:10, 13; 43:3; 48:17; 49:4; 50:10; 51:1, 20, 22; 52:7, 10; 53:4, 54:6; 55:5, 6).⁶⁶ But it should be remarked that the plural form is used when a suffix (second person singular or plural) is added or when the name is constructed "God of Israel" (אלהי ישראל, 41:17; 45:3, 15; 48:1, 2; 52:12). Only a few occurrences show the plural form in the absolute and only in sentences witnessing that beside Yhwh there is no other God (44:6; 45:14, 21; 46:9). Moreover the presence of the definite article on the singular form in 42:5a (הוא האל יהוה) and once on the plural form (הוא האלהים יוצר) (הארץ, 45:18) participates in the uniqueness of the God Yhwh.⁶⁷ And that definition of Yhwh is enhanced by his numerous attributes: holy, creator (41:20, 43:15, 45:11), redeemer (41:14, 43:14, 47:4, 48:17, 49:7, 54:5) and saviour (43:3). He is also God of eternity (אלהי עולם יהוה, 40:28a) and God of the celestial armies, as we shall see (יהוה צבאות, 44:6, 45:13, 48:2, 51:15, 54:5). The uniqueness of Yhwh is however best demonstrated in Deutero-Isaiah through Yhwh's incomparability. No one can compare with him (45:5, 6, 7, 14, 22; 46:9) and no image can be made of him (40:18, 25; 44:7; 46:5). Monotheism has been the subject of important studies in recent research. And it has been argued that no strict monotheism could be defended at the time of the prophet. Against strict monotheism, two major arguments may be retained: the one developed by A. Schenker and entitled monotheism of transcendence (against monotheism of essence), and the one exposed by A. Sérandour concerning the theology or ideology of the throne. In the first case, the author

64 C. C. Broyles, "The Citations of Yahweh in Isaiah 44:26–28," in *Writing & Reading the Scroll of Isaiah, Studies of an Interpretative Tradition* (ed. C. C. Broyles and C. A. Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 399–421.

65 On the name of Yhwh, Morgenstern once argued that the divine name in Deutero-Isaiah was reminiscent of Exodus 3 because of the rhetorical sequence אלהי יהוה. Cf. J. Morgenstern, "Deutero-Isaiah's Terminology for Universal God," *JBL* 62 (1943): 269–80.

66 H. Ringgren, "אלהים," *TDOT* 1:277–84; F. M. Cross, "אל," *TDOT* 1:253–62.

67 It only participates since no clear rule can be decreed concerning the use of the article in proper names. Cf. P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1996), § 137d.

demonstrates that if other gods are criticized, it means that their very existence is acknowledged for otherwise the critique would be senseless.⁶⁸ In the second case, the author demonstrates that gods are national by definition and that every ancient kingdom has its own god that is the god of the throne: the dynastic god. The gods of 'the Other/s' may then well become an enemy of Yhwh's throne if they endanger it. Naturally, these other gods would need to be condemned, conquered or ridiculed for the sake of defending the dynastic throne.⁶⁹ The third argument is, of course, archaeological.⁷⁰ However, anyone reading Deutero-Isaiah may remain doubtful as S. Weeks, though his demonstration, in no way would contradict the actual trend.⁷¹ In light of the above analysis and the implementation of Yhwh as king, it remains to be seen how the motif of water can enlighten the political and theological reflexion at work in Deutero-Isaiah.

As it is often remarked, Yhwh appears as creator in Deutero-Isaiah,⁷² and the role of water can easily demonstrate the power of Yhwh as seen above. Therefore the kingship of Yhwh can not be separated from his attribute as creator. At this point, it may be recalled that

68 "Les dieux existent bel et bien, mais ils sont impuissants en comparaison de Yhwh qui, lui, crée le bien et le malheur, Is 45,7, et annonce les événements, Is 41,25–29. Les dieux sont appelés néant parce que leur pouvoir et leur avoir est néant à côté de celui de Yhwh. « Néant » (v.24) se réfère clairement au pouvoir limité et au savoir restreint des divinités, non à leur existence. On ne peut parler par conséquent de monothéisme d'existence chez ce prophète." Cf. A. Schenker, "L'institution des dieux et des religions: l'unicité du Dieu de la Bible," in *Bible et sciences des religions: judaïsme, christianisme, islam* (ed. F. Mies; Namur: Éditions Lessius, 2005), 32.

69 A. Sérandour, "De l'apparition d'un monothéisme dans la religion d'Israël (III^e siècle av. J.-C. ou plus tard?)," *Diogenes* 205 (2004): 47–48.

70 See the vast literature for example in W. Dietrich and M. A. Klopfenstein, eds., *Ein Gott allein?: JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer Monotheismus im Kontext der israelitischen und altorientalischen Religionsgeschichte* (OBO 139; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).

71 "It is not clear whether or not Second Isaiah's statements about Yahweh can properly be described as monotheistic. There are certainly significant obstacles to any understanding of the text in terms of modern, ontologically oriented monotheism; it should not be forgotten, moreover, that statements of divine incomparability—the key element in Second Isaiah's pronouncement—are found in other ancient texts which certainly recognized the existence of many gods. For the moment, let us say simply that Second Isaiah views other deities as useless and impotent when set beside Yahweh. This enables the work to attack idols not only on the basis of their manufactured nature, but, more significantly, on the grounds that there is no value in the deities which they represent." Cf. S. Weeks, "Man-made Gods? Idolatry in the Old Testament," in *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity* (ed. S. C. Barton; London: T & T Clark, 2007), 19.

72 J. Vermeulen, "Le motif de la création dans le Deutéro-Isaïe," in *La création dans l'Orient ancien* (ed. L. Derousseaux; Paris: Cerf, 1987), 240.

Yhwh's incomparability is often contrasted with the תהו, *tohu* of the other gods along with their works and the ones who make them (יִצְרִי-פַסֵּל כֹּלם תְּהוּ וְחַמּוּדֵיהֶם בִּלְיִוְעִילוֹ [tohu] and their precious works are of no avail," 44:9). Moreover the creation of the earth is not meant to be תהו (45:18) nor is Jacob meant to search for Yhwh in תהו (45:19). The act of creation is clearly again referring to Gen 1–2 and is all the more significant if one recalls the meaning of the West-Semitic root of תהו: "desert."⁷³ And all that is not Yhwh's creation is somehow sent back into a state of pre- or no-creation. Creation is also associated with redemption: the creator Yhwh is also the redeemer of Israel and the spouse of Zion. It is therefore probable that beyond the political implementation of Yhwh as king (which makes it so that there is no need for a human mediator), there is some deeper theological insight at work.

Another point should be made: the other divinities are never mentioned by name. It does not mean that the other gods do not exist, but it does mean that the other gods are redefined; they are nought because they can not create. In other words, if they exist, they have been created by Yhwh; they are creatures no more and in that sense, the mentioning of Rahab is very significant (51:9). So not only are deities "démonisés" as A. Sérandour concluded, but they are moved back from the rank of divine capable of creating—therefore that of fulfilling the definition of being God—to that of divine being incapable of creating or redeeming because they themselves have been created. In that sense, there is only one God emerging from Deutero-Isaiah and his recurring title "Lord of the armies" is to be understood in that way: heaven is populated with divine creatures but Yhwh is their God and king just as he is the God and king of Israel.

Therefore the question of universalism cannot be avoided: is Deutero-Isaiah only concerned with rhetorical techniques to move his audience or has the contemporary reflexion brought some new possibility of understanding and defining the divine? A look at the different notions of universalism in Deutero-Isaiah is again helpful. What may be called universalistic motifs are both spatial and temporal and often play on the same roots. For example, the recurrent מֵרֵאשׁ is mainly temporal, meaning "from the beginning" and a reminder of the very first word of

73 Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 10–35. This etymological analysis is corroborated by the biblical literary analysis: "There is no sign of either personification or mythological allusion in the biblical use of תהו. It is not a mythical idea but means desert, waste, devastation, nothingness. (...) And when תהו and בהו occur together there is no real difference in meaning." Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 102–3.

the Torah (40:21, 41:4, 26; 48:16). But in one instance it is spatial meaning "from the top" (42:11). Another significant expression is קצות הארץ, "the ends of the earth" (40:28; 41:5, 9) with its different grammatical constructions מקצה הארץ (42:10, 43:6) and עד־קצה הארץ (48:20, 49:6) or variant אפסי־ארץ (52:10). The isles איים and the seas also play a significant role in redefining the confines of the earth (41:1, 5; 42:4, 10, 12; 49:1; 51:5). All of these expressions tend to demonstrate that Yhwh is God and king of all the earth: אלהי כל־הארץ יקרא (54:5b). Therefore it becomes clear that the new political situation is not that of the old one, when the kingdom of Yhwh was held in the map of Israel or Judah. The new political situation is that of the Diaspora so that it may respond to the following question: if Yhwh remained the God of Judah alone, what would become of those Israelites far away? It seems therefore that the universalism at work in Deutero-Isaiah is not only rhetorical or poetical. It takes the political situation into account and offers a new definition that will allow those from afar to remain the people of Yhwh. In fact, the servant of God is called from afar. If his people are at the ends of the earth, Yhwh will go to the ends of the earth and be their God and king. Nothing in Deutero-Isaiah is restraining this movement since even those afar who are not Israelite are waiting to turn to Yhwh as their God.⁷⁴ Furthermore the universalistic expressions encountered mirror the divinity of Yhwh who is first (אני ראשון, 41:4b, 44:6b, 48:12b), that is from the beginning, and last (אני אחרון, with variants 41:4b, 44:6b, 48:12b), that is until the end. That quality of Yhwh, first and last, is connected with his divine works: the first and the last things⁷⁵ (הראשונה / אחרית, 41:22; 42:9; 43:9; 46:9, 10; 47:7, 48:3). From this literary analysis, it follows that the nature of Yhwh is reflected in his works: he is first and last, he comprehends the first and the last things. This axiom of Yhwh's divinity can not be separated from his attribute as creator and therefore finds its own demonstration: the first things must refer to the beginning that is Gen 1:1 and more broadly Gen 1–9. And Isa 43:27 is a clear refer-

74 The illusion part of the message should be recalled as J. Blenkinsopp does. Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, "Second Isaiah – Prophet of Universalism," *JSOT* 41 (1988): 91–99.

75 Whatever these first and last things may be referring to in their numerous occurrences: 41:21–29 (22); 42:8–9; 43:8–13, 16–21; 44:6–8 and 46:9–11; 48:1–11 (3:6). See the analysis of J.-D. Macchi: "A part en Es 43,18–19, on se rend compte que le concept de 'choses premières' est toujours présenté de manière positive par le discours. En effet, même s'il est difficile de savoir quand ont eu lieu les 'choses premières' (ראשונה) et même s'il s'agit de jugement ou de salut, elles désignent ce qui après avoir été annoncé fut accompli par Yhwh, témoignant ainsi de sa supériorité tout en rendant crédible l'annonce de choses nouvelles." Cf. J.-D. Macchi, "Ne ressassez plus les choses d'autrefois: Esaïe 43, 16–21, un surprenant regard deutéro-ésaïen sur le passé," *ZAW* 121 (2009): 235.

ence to this beginning. Accordingly Deutero-Isaiah offers the demonstration that no other god has been creating and, even more so, that no other god has been created (לפני לא־נוצר אל, 43:10). In that sense, Yhwh becomes the only God according to the theological definition involved that only a god-creator can be called God.⁷⁶

It remains true that Yhwh is never said to be “king of the earth” but only “king of Israel.” But the definition at stake deals constantly with announcing him so that the universalism can be called prophetic: Yhwh as he is now newly defined is to be announced to the ends of the earth. Only then when he is acknowledged will he truly be king of all the earth. It appears therefore that the motif of the water(s) of abundance is used in Deutero-Isaian theology of creation so as to serve the definition of Yhwh’s uniqueness and unique universal kingship.

In the book of Ezekiel the motif is at work, though differently, since it is the temple of Jerusalem that gushes forth water(s) of abundance (Ezek 47).⁷⁷ And this gushing forth is announced beforehand in the return of Yhwh: “And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the East. And His voice was like the sound of many waters (וקולו כקול מים רבים); and the earth shone with His glory.” (43:2). It is even announced in the inaugural vision of the prophet where the divine chariot sounds like water(s) in abundance: “I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters (קול כנפיהם כקול מים רבים כקול־שדי as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.” (1:24). The kingship of Yhwh is also proclaimed as kings are condemned for idolatry and harlotry (43:7–9). And one last element may be underlined: Yhwh is a God of rain (34:25–26) though he may retain his rain in days of doom and disobedience (22:24). All of these references, though not many, lead to the recognition of the same motif at work in the book of Ezekiel. Water(s) of abundance is (are) the sign of Yhwh’s unique kingship over Israel. His return therefore literally sounds like mighty waters and his presence in the temple is acknowledged by those waters gushing forth from every point.

In the book of Zechariah, it is the eschatological kingship of Yhwh that is depicted in the absence of a human royal figure. Also, the throne

76 S. Anthonioz, ‘À qui me comparerez-vous?’ (Is 40,25): *La polémique contre l’idolâtrie dans le Deutéro-Isaïe* (Lectio divina 241, Paris: Cerf, 2011), 95–99.

77 S. Tuell, “The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Genesis 2:10–14,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (ed. S. McBride and W. Brown; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 171–89.

of David, but even more so Jerusalem and the temple, are a source of gushing waters: "And in that day living waters (מים חיים) will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. ⁹ And Yhwh will be king over all the earth; in that day Yhwh will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one" (14:8–9). Water(s) of life is (are) the sign of Yhwh's unique kingship. Moreover Yhwh is nothing but a God of rain (10:1) of whom rains and blessings should be asked. So it appears that the motif is at work in this book too, though one may notice another small reworking: in Zech 13:1, the image of an "opened fountain" (מקור נפתח) is in turn reworked as those waters are for the cleansing of sin and of impurity. In all of these cases and notwithstanding their own originality, one clearly sees the motif of the water(s) of abundance reworked so as to proclaim Yhwh's unique and universal kingship.

4. Conclusion

Water gushing forth in Mesopotamia is the image, *par excellence*, of life divine given to humanity through the king and the literary motif of abundance can be traced over millennia. This essay first reviewed that literature and showed how myths of creation and royal inscriptions could not be separated from each other in order to understand the theology at work, that of royal mediation: the waters that gushed forth in the beginning are flowing continually through the king who is responsible before the gods for that gift. In a second part, I endeavoured to show the influence and transmission of such a motif to the West, from the royal and literary reservoir of Sumer and Akkad to the courts of Amorite Middle-Euphrates and Assyria. Finally, the investigation continued in the Pentateuch with a special attention to the creation narratives (Gen 1–2). There, in the first creation narrative, water does not gush forth as would have been expected, and in the second narrative, humanity is exiled from Eden, which is watered by its four-headed river. Moreover, the promise that Yhwh would send rain is left unanswered in Gen 2:5 until Deut 11:10–17 as if the law had become the only means of mediating Yhwh's gift of life. The conclusion leads therefore to the divine kingship of Yhwh alone. It seems coherent that the royal mediation defining the institution of kingship in the ancient Near East would be brought under sharp criticism after the Judean experience of exile. Therefore we see that in the exilic and postexilic frame of the Pentateuch, human kingship disappears and with it the sign and literary

motif of the water(s) of abundance. This analysis was then confirmed and developed in Deutero-Isaiah. If water(s) gushing forth is (are) the sign of Yhwh's kingship, it is also the sign of his attributes of creator and redeemer and the sign of his giving of the law. Therefore the motif is reworked and still expanded to serve not only a theology of creation but also the nascent monotheism and universalism of God. Finally the motif could be confirmed in other postexilic prophetic books, Ezekiel and Zechariah, offering both their own poetic and theological reworking by proclaiming that Yhwh alone is king and that the water(s) of abundance be they "mighty and many waters" or "waters of life" are but the sign of his divine kingship.

The Nile in Biblical Memory

DIANA EDELMAN

1. Introduction

The Nile, like the Tigris and Euphrates, was a perennial river that flooded annually, which led to the use of irrigation agriculture on land adjoining its banks and in the Delta region, unlike the situation in the southern Levant, where agriculture was dependent on rainfall. The biblical writers have been able to use the Nile, which, by virtue of its function as a central life-line, can represent both Pharaoh and the wider land of Egypt in the various collected books in a way that helps shape the identity of Israel as separate from this “other” in shared memory. While Egypt is a place of abundant food and plenty (Gen 12:10–20; 41–48; Num 11), Israel can serve only one master, YHWH, and this is best done in the land YHWH has set aside particularly for his people (Deut 8:7–9). By portraying Pharaoh to claim to be a god, and by personifying him and the Nile as the mythical watery chaos monster Tannin, the writers emphasize both the negative, rebellious character of this “other” and simultaneously assert that YHWH, a universal god, controls events in Egypt as well as its rulers. In one memory, the Nile can even be affirmed to be the southern limit of the promised land, where Jews may still live as YHWH’s people, bringing divine blessings of agricultural richness to their host nations by virtue of their presence (Gen 15:18). In this paper I will examine most uses of the Nile in the biblical texts and the associations they might have evoked amongst those who read and reread the collection of texts currently assembled in the MT by the end of the Hellenistic period (332–146 BCE).

2. Preliminaries

In the Bible the Nile is most frequently called *hayyē’ōr*, which means “the channel” or “the branch.” This seems to be an adoption of the native Egyptian designation, *irw*, “river,” derived from an older Egyptian

form *itrw* used prior to the Eighteenth Dynasty (ca. 1550–1292 BCE), from which the medial *t* dropped out.¹ The uses of the plural form seem to allude to the characteristic splitting of the Nile into multiple branches in the Delta region (Exod 7:19; 8:1; 2 Kgs 19:24; Isa 7:18; 33:21; 37:25). In other cases, the Nile is designated as a generic perennial stream (Ezek 29:3–5, 10; 30:12; Nah 3:8; Ps 78:44; Job 28:10), a *nāhār* (Gen 15:18; Exod 7:19; Isa 19:5) and a sea, *yām* (Nah 3:8). The Delta region comprises two-thirds of the usable surface area of Egypt,² so it is not surprising that its characteristic branching to form an alluvial fan where the Nile enters the Mediterranean became its defining feature. In addition to these two ways to describe the central river of Egypt, other types of water sources associated with the land of Egypt in the Bible include a shallow pond with reeds (*ʿāgam*) and a pool (*miqweh*) (Exod 7:19; 8:1). They both evoke the Delta region in Lower Egypt.

Specific sites or regions associated with Egypt by the biblical writers are not, however, all located in the Delta. Those that were include the land of Goshen (Gen 46:28–47:6),³ Pithom/Avaris (Exod 1:11), Pi-Rameses (Exod 1:11), Daphne/Tahpanhes (Jer 2:16; 43:7–8; 44:1; Ezek 30:18), Pi-Beseth=Bubastis (Ezek 30:17), Zoan/Tanis (Num 13:22; Isa 19:11, 13; 30:4; Ezek 30:14; Ps 78:12, 43), Sîn/Sais (Ezek 30:15–16), and Heliopolis/On (Jer 43:13; Gen 41:45, 50; 46:20; Ezek 30:17).⁴ Memphis/Noph (Isa 19:13; Jer 2:16; 44:1; 46:14, 19; Ezek 30:13, 16), which lay south of the branching on the left bank of the main river 20 km south of Cairo, was the southernmost nome of Lower Egypt.⁵ Two cities in

1 For a discussion of the name in Egyptian, see Adolph Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1926), 146–47 (“*itrw*”); Werner Vycichl, “Ägyptische Ortsname in der Bibel,” *ZÄS* 76 (1940): 79–93 (81–82); William F. Albright, review of J. Vergote, *Phonétique historique de l’Égyptien, les consonnes*, *JAOS* 66 (1946): 316–20 (316–17); Thomas O. Lambdin, “Egyptian Loan Words in the Old Testament,” *JAOS* 73 (1953): 145–55 (151).

2 Jean Lozach, *Le delta du Nil. Étude de géographie humaine* (Publications de la Société royale de géographie d’Égypte; Cairo: E. & R. Schindler, 1935), 2.

3 See William A. Ward, “Goshen,” *ABD* 2:1076–77.

4 The Egyptian name of the site of “the city of the sun,” Heliopolis in Greek, which is assumed to be the referent of the Hebrew phrase Beth-Shemesh, “temple of the sun,” was Ounû, “Pillared City.” Thus, Ezek 30:17 is using the native name. Located at Tell el-Hiṣn-Maṭariyah in a suburb of modern Cairo, it was a religious center for the worship of the sun-god Atum-Re, head of the Ennead. See James P. Allen, “Heliopolis,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (ed. Donald B. Redford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2:88–89; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52* (AB 21C; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 149–50.

5 See, e.g., Henri Brugsch-Bey, *La géographie des nomes: ou division administrative de la haute et de la basse Égypte aux époques des pharaons, des Ptolémées et des empereurs Romains* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1879), 7; Eric P. Uphill, *Egyptian Towns and Cities* (Shire

Pathros, or Upper Egypt, were known by name to the biblical writers. They include No-Amon/Thebes (Ezek 30:14,16; Nah 3:8), which lay 800 km upstream from the Mediterranean, and Syene (Ezek 29:10; 30:6), which was located near the modern Aswan dam at the first cataract (Isa 11:11; Jer 44:1,15; Ezek 29:14; 30:14), in the southernmost nome of Upper Egypt. Thus, knowledge of the country's settled sites was not limited to the region that was the most accessible from the southern Levant.

The biblical writers were aware the Nile rose (Amos 9:5; Jer 46:8) and fell. They considered it a source of fish (Exod 7:18, 21; Isa 19:8; Ezek 29:4–5), of water for drinking (Exod 7:18, 21, 24; 2 Kgs 19:24; Isa 37:25; Ps 78:44), knew or assumed that reeds and rushes grew in its shallows, as did flax (Isa 19:6–9), and knew or assumed the land adjoining it was planted with grain (Isa 19:7; 23:3). These would have been logical assumptions about any perennial river. Since there is nothing in these descriptions of the Nile that would distinguish it from other perennial rivers, like the Tigris and Euphrates, the writers' knowledge of this land may or may not have been first-hand.

Be that as it may, the texts recall that famine can strike Egypt as well as the southern Levant (Gen 41). The lack of adequate rainfall in Upper Egypt can affect the overall volume of the Nile, and if it does not reach its normal heights, it will not flood properly and deposit rich silt in the adjoining fields or have adequate volume for ongoing irrigation. So while Egypt was remembered as a land of plenty derived from well-watered fields (Gen 13:10 according to some; 42; Num 11:4–6; Deut 11:10), this plenty was still contingent on weather systems, albeit in a different way than the southern Levant was. The latter region was dependent on rainfall to water crops, so that in years of little or no rain, subsistence farmers in the southern Levant experienced famine (e.g., Gen 12:10; 26:1–6; Deut 11:17; 28:24; Ruth 1; 1 Kgs 17; 2 Kgs 25:3; Neh 5:3). Yet too much rain could produce equally devastating effects by

Egyptology 8; Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 1988), 66–67; Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 86–87. According to Douglas J. Brewer and Emily Teeter, *Egypt and the Egyptians* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 82–83, many of the forty-two nomes, twenty-two in Upper Egypt and twenty in Lower Egypt, were established by the reign of Niuserre (ca. 2445–2421 BCE) in Dynasty Five, as indicated by the topographical lists on the Abu Sir Papyrus. However, those in the Delta were not finalized until the first millennium, because of slow but steady land reclamation; under Senwosret I (ca. 1965–1920 BCE) in the Twelfth Dynasty, there were only sixteen, but in the Nineteenth Dynasty, there were the final twenty (Henri Gauthier, *Les nomes d'Égypte depuis Hérodote jusqu'à la conquête arab* [Mémoires de l'Institut d'Égypte 25; Cairo: l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1935], viii). There were thirty-six in total prior to the New Kingdom (Uphill, *Egyptian Towns*, 15).

washing away crops or rotting grain at harvest time, and hail and snow that arrived out of season could also kill off crops.

The book of Deuteronomy optimistically characterizes the land of Canaan as “a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills” (8:7). Numbers is less complementary; it is a land “that devours its inhabitants” (13:32). While the first description is meant to be positive, it still expresses a difference between Israel’s divinely appointed place and Egypt as an “other” place, where the Nile produces a different rhythm of life for its local inhabitants due to its annual flooding. Israel is remembered to have sojourned in Egypt (Lev 19:34; Deut 26:5; Isa 52:4; Ps 105:23) or to have been enslaved there in the past,⁶ but YHWH also created his people by removing them from there (e.g., Lev 11:45; 26:45; Deut 4:20; 9:26; 1 Kgs 8:51, 53; Hos 13:4) so that Egypt becomes a means of defining Israel by virtue of the two being separated in space, place, and time.⁷

3. The Nile as a Site of Memory in the Pentateuch

What does the Nile conjure in the social past of the readers and hearers of the biblical texts written in Hebrew and Aramaic? This can be asked of both current audiences and of audiences who had encountered the texts by the late Hellenistic period, when most of them existed as a collection being read and reread or heard and reheard together. While the socio-historical and cultural circumstances will vary even among contemporaneous actual audiences as well as among diachronic audiences, the collection of texts itself contains an encoding of selected social memories that are frozen in time, as it were, which provides the basis for reinforcing certain values and associations that logically should be apparent to all readers or hearers of the larger collection, regardless of their personal backgrounds. Additional overlays of signif-

6 Deut 5:6, 15; 6:12, 21; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5, 10; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22; 28:68; Josh 24:17; Judg 6:8; 1 Sam 2:27; Isa 10:24; Jer 34:13.

7 For the identity-defining function of place, see conveniently, Tim Cresswell, *Place: A short introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 26–29, 39, 44, 49, 61, 68, 70, 97. For this specific function in the biblical story of the Exodus, see Franz V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch’s Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel’s Identity* (JSOTSup 361; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 78–79, 158–67, 179, 203–5. For a more complex reading of the Exodus story in terms of how Israel became a nation while still in Egypt, with membership defined by the Passover, see Diana Lipton, *Longing for Egypt and Other Unexpected Biblical Tales* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 15; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), 13–49.

icance and meaning undoubtedly will be attributed to sites or nodes of memory by individuals and groups on the basis of events they experience and their adopted world-views that prevail in the region where and time when they live, and these will differ accordingly, though some may be shared amongst different groups. The ensuing discussion will focus on values for the Nile that can be derived from a reading of the collection of books that eventually becomes the TANAK in Jewish circles and the Protestant Bible in Christian circles.

In the texts of the HB, the Nile serves as a metonym for Egypt, as does Pharaoh. It can be asked if all or only some of the biblical writers had first-hand or even second-hand knowledge that Pharaoh could be identified with the river in its deified during the inundation of “Ha’py, who overflows every day; who gives life to Egypt.”⁸ Ideologically, the inundation demonstrated how the pharaoh was the source of blessing and abundance for his people and the land, and during the New Kingdom (ca 1550–1070 BCE), the annual coronation ceremony of the king, circuit of the walls, and festival of the diadem took place in the new year that began with the inundation in late June.⁹ However, this view reflects the specific, local Egyptian version of standard ancient Near Eastern royal ideology, which was influenced by the local ecology and environment.¹⁰ Outsiders who had heard of the Nile and heard it was the life-blood of Egyptian social and economic life would naturally have created the metaphor, Pharaoh is the Nile.

In the specific form that mentions one or more river channels (*hayy’ôr* or *hayy’ôrîm*), the Nile evokes the ancestors of Israel in Egypt. Pharaoh’s dream that could not be interpreted by anyone except Joseph involves seven fat and seven lean cows emerging from the Nile; the

8 This is the first line of the “Hymn to the Inundation of the Nile” a heavily copied school text used to train scribes in the New Kingdom (ca. 1550–1070 BCE). For the text, see Dirk van der Plas, *L’Hymne à la Crue du Nil, Vol. 1: Traduction et commentaire* (Egyptologische Uitgaven 4.1; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1986). For Hapy, see Danielle Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil: Divinité égyptienne à travers mille ans d’histoire, 332 av.–641 ap. J.-c.* (Études et commentaires 52; Paris: Klincksieck, 1964); Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 106–8; Jean Pierre Corteggiani, *L’Égypte ancienne et ses dieux: Dictionnaire illustré* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 164–67; John Baines, *Fecundity Figures: Egyptian Personification and the Iconology of a Genre* (Modern Egyptology; Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1985), 198–207.

9 See, for example, John D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1997), 243; Terje Oestigaard, *Horus’ Eye and Osiris’ Efflux: The Egyptian Civilisation of Inundation c. 3000–2000 BCE* (BAR International Series 2228; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 59–66.

10 For a more in-depth description, see Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1989), 46–63.

first group grazed among the reeds adjoining the bank (Gen 41:1–4; 17–21). It images Egypt as a land of refuge and plenty during a time of famine in Canaan and in doing so, indirectly recalls the time spent there by the ancestor Abraham (Gen 12:10–20).

At the same time, however, it is made clear that the ancestors always formed a distinguishable enclave while in Egypt and that Egypt was not “their land” (Gen 15:13), in spite of the Nile being able to be considered the southern boundary of the land YHWH defines for Abraham’s descendants in Gen 15:18: from “the River of Egypt,” i.e., the Nile¹¹ to “the Great River, the River Euphrates.” Here there seems to be a more generous view than in other books. Its author has accepted the reality of existing Jewish diasporic communities beyond the core homeland in Canaan, assigning them the function mentioned in Gen 12:3 and its variant in Gen 22:18 of being agents of blessing among the nations. Only by having descendants of Israel living in their lands can nations within these extended boundaries gain blessings from the universal god, YHWH. Both of the ancestral figures, Abraham and Joseph, manage to benefit while living in Egypt, though only the story of Jo-

11 In spite of the recognition that *nahar misrayim*, “the river of Egypt,” normally designates the Nile (e.g., Exod 7:19; Isa 19:5), scholars are reluctant to accept the statement at face value because they assume the author must be describing the southern boundary of Canaan, which commonly is equated with the Wadi el-Arish in north-eastern Sinai (Num 34:5; Josh 15:4, 47; 1 Kgs 8:65; 2 Kgs 24:7; Isa 27:12; 2 Chr 7:8). Some try to solve this perceived inconsistency by proposing the text has been corrupted from an original *nāhāl*, “wadi or brook,” to *nāhār*, “river.” So, for example, Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1972), 188–89; Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982), 114. Jan Simons tried another tack. He proposed the Wadi el-Arish could be designated by the alternate, synonymous phrase, “river of Egypt” (*The Geographical and Topographical texts of the Old Testament: A Concise Commentary in XXXII Chapters* [Leiden: Brill 1959], 27). This solution is adopted, on the one hand, by, e.g., Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36* (trans. John J. Scullion; London: SPCK, 1986), 229 and Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 161. On the other hand, Terence E. Fretheim translates the phrase as “Brook of Egypt” but then adds “(not the Nile, but of uncertain location) (*Abraham: Trials of Family and Faith* [Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia, S.C.: University of Southern Carolina Press, 2007], 190 n. 25). A third resolution is sought by suggesting it designates the north-easternmost branch of the Nile, which would extend closest to the Wadi el-Arish but still lie well to the south; so Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* (2d rev. and emended ed.; trans. Anson Rainey; London: Burns & Oates, 1979), 64–65; Gordon I. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 333. Even so, Wenham see the reference to the Nile to be hyperbole since it lies outside the traditional boundaries of “the promised land.” Acceptance of the boundary as the Nile can be found, for example, in John Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC 1; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), 283, who sees this to be an ideal limit, and P. J. Calderone, “The Rivers of ‘Maṣor,’” *Bib* 42 (1961): 423–32 (431).

seph illustrates the positive benefits for the natives. Pharaoh loses rather than gains from Abraham's presence in Egypt, and it could be argued that Abraham takes matters into his own hands to gain a personal share of the material blessing God promised to bestow through him upon others.

The references to the *y'ôr(im)* in Exodus recall the birth of Moses, the third sign meant to convince the Israelite slaves that YHWH has sent Moses to rescue them from Egyptian slavery, and the first and second plagues. In the story of Moses' birth, the Nile becomes both an intended means of killing all baby Hebrew boys by drowning them (Exod 1:22) and the means of rescuing Moses by setting him adrift in a reed basket sealed with bitumen and pitch in the reedy shallows, where pharaoh's daughter would spot him (Exod 2:1–10). Thus, the river, like most rivers, encodes the opposing values of life and death.

Besides changing his staff into a snake and turning his hand leprous as confirmatory signs that YHWH has commissioned Moses to lead his people from slavery in Egypt, a third sign is given: changing the water of the Nile to blood (Exod 4:1–9).¹² The latter then becomes the first official plague (Exod 7:15–24; 17:5) when the first sign meant to convince the Israelites, the changing of Moses' staff into a snake, does not work on Pharaoh (Exod 7:8–13). The Nile is the source of the second plague as well; frogs emerge from it, as they do from the perennial streams and reed ponds of Egypt, and overrun the adjoining habitable land (Exod 7:26–8:10 [ET 8:1–14]).

The Nile, then, recalls the first and second plagues, the first saving acts of YHWH toward his people.¹³ It can be noted that, while the send-

12 For attempts to provide natural explanations for the "blood," see, for instance, W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Egypt and Israel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1911), 35–36, who suggested this was the Nile at its lowest in early June, just before the annual inundation, when it is stagnant, red, and swarming with organisms. Contrast, for example, the suggestion by Greta Hort, "The Plagues of Egypt," *ZAW* 69 (1957): 84–103 (87–95), that it was the result of high inundation, when the river turned red from churned up sediment and bacteria from the mountain lakes and streams that once water borne, caused the fish to die.

13 In light of subsequent claims in the narrative that YHWH is executing judgments against all the gods of Egypt (12:12; 33:4) and mocking them in his judgment (10:2), it has been suggested that his first plague involves the defeat of the Nile River personified as the fertility god Hapy, who, according to the Hymn to the Nile, "makes man and cattle live," and his second one the fertility goddess Heqet, who was associated with frogs. See, for example, Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983 [1951]), 99, 101; John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in the Book of Exodus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1971), 79–129; James K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt, Plagues In," *ABD* 2:374–78 (376–77); Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 109–10. However, as noted by Hoffmeier, it is more likely the nar-

ing of plagues upon Egypt is remembered generally in Josh 24:5 and Amos 4:10, Ps 78:44–51 and Ps 105:28–36 are the only other biblical texts outside the book of Exodus in which the first two plagues are enumerated, alongside subsequent ones.¹⁴ Otherwise, the only sign or plague singled out in the biblical books is YHWH's killing of the Egyptian firstborn (Num 3:13; 8:17; 33:4; probably Deut 7:18; Ps 78:51; 105:36; 135:8; 136:10). This honor appears to derive from the need to create a basis for YHWH's claim to all human and animal firstborns in Israel (Num 3:13; 8:17; Lev 27:26), which is a secondary use of the Exodus memory to bolster cultic regulations.¹⁵ Summarily, the Exodus complex is recalled as YHWH having performed signs, wonders, and miracles,¹⁶

rative is directed at Pharaoh's inability, as the son of Re, to maintain cosmic order, which would include responsibility for the ordering of nature ("Egypt," 377; followed by Currid, *Ancient Egypt*, 242–44). While John I. Durham has correctly noted that 12:12 relates only to the tenth plague, where the gods of Israel are judged and punished, he has overlooked the references in 10:2 and 33:4 (*Exodus* [WBC 3; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987], 104).

- 14 The lists in both psalms do not correspond fully with those in the book of Exodus, however. Psalm 78 lacks reference to the third plague of biting insects, the sixth of boils and blains on the cattle, and the ninth of darkness. It mentions instead a plague of caterpillars in conjunction with the locusts (v. 46) and of frost in conjunction with the hail (v. 47). The list in Psalm 105 omits the fifth plague of cattle disease and the sixth but adds no alternate plagues. For the differences and suggestions about their implications, see, e.g., Charles A. Briggs and Emilie G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Vol. II (ICC 15; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909), 188–89, 195–96, 346–47; Baruch Margulis, "The Plagues Tradition in Psalm 105," *Bib* 50 (1969): 491–96; Svend Holm-Nielsen, "The Exodus Tradition in Ps 105," *ASTI* 11 (1971): 22–30; Anthony Campbell, "Psalm 78: A Contribution to the Theology of Tenth Century Israel," *CBQ* 41 (1979): 51–79; Erik Haglund, *Historical Motifs in the Psalms* (ConBOT 23; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1984), 25–26, 94–95, 102–3; Archie C. C. Lee, "The Context and Function of the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 78," *JSOT* 48 (1990): 83–89; idem, "Genesis I and the Plagues Tradition in Psalm CV," *VT* 40 (1990): 257–63; Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition* (trans. Baruch J. Schwartz; Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1992), 69–188; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 288–90, 297–98; idem, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 72–73.
- 15 It has been proposed that the killing of the firstborn was an independent tradition that was later incorporated into the Passover ritual as the culmination of the plague traditions by, e.g., Georg Fohrer, *Überlieferung und Geschichte des Exodus. Eine Analyse von Ex 1–15* (BZAW 91; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), 96; Robert Martin-Achard, *Essai biblique sur les fêtes d'Israël* (Geneva: Éditions Labor et Fides, 1974), 35–36; and Haglund, *Historical Motifs*, 103. For a different approach, which sees the two as independent but argues the Passover ritual was inserted into the plague tradition, which culminates in the killing of the firstborn, see Loewenstamm, *Evolution of Exodus Tradition*, 189–220.
- 16 Num 14:22; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 11:3; 26:8; 34:11; Josh 24:17; 2 Sam 7:23; Jer 32:20; Mic 7:15; Ps 78:12, 43; 106:7; 135:9.

which includes the changing of the Nile's water to blood as the first plague and third sign and the second plague of frogs that emerged from the Nile and other water sources.

It might also be noted that the first plague forms a kind of anticipatory bookend to the final miraculous parting of the *yam sūp*, the Sea of Reeds/Sea of Termination. The water of the Nile's channels, along with all waters in tributaries, pools and reed ponds, become blood, which harms the Egyptians, depriving them of fish and potable water. The final event at the "Sea of Reeds" leads to the destruction of the Egyptian military, once again, through the agency of water. In both instances, YHWH demonstrates his ability to use natural elements to punish those whom he chooses.¹⁷

4. The Nile as a Site of Memory in the Prophetic Texts

The uses of *hayye'ôr* or *hayye'ôrîm* in prophetic texts show a range of associations.

4.1 Jeremiah 46:7–8

Jeremiah 46:7–8 highlights how the past is remembered in patterns, which can be intermixed to create multiple layers of association. The two verses know of the annual rising of the Nile's waters to a surge that temporarily floods the lands adjoining the main channels. This, however, is not connected with the Exodus or with the ancestors in Egypt. Instead, it is framed as flood imagery and its associative meanings.¹⁸ The flood becomes a means of overturning order and a divine agent in

17 They tend to serve in this capacity in Ps 78. The crossing of the Sea of Reeds first serves to encapsulate or illustrate the miracles YHWH had done for the ancestors in the land of Egypt (vv. 11–13). Subsequently, when returning to this theme, v. 12 is repeated in v. 43, after which the plagues are recalled in vv. 44–51, beginning with the turning of the rivers to blood so they could not drink from their channels.

18 The mythical dimension of the flood has been commented on by, e.g., Herbert May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, 'Many Waters,'" *JBL* 74 (1955): 9–21; Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (OTL; London: SCM, 1986), 764; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26–52* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, 1989), 321; Douglas R. Jones, *Jeremiah* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 493. Holladay is a minority voice in suggesting there might be "an ironic reminder here of the waters that 'covered' the Egyptian chariots at the Exodus (Exod 14:28; 15:5, 10)" (p. 321).

war.¹⁹ The flood as a divine agent in war can be seen in Judg 5:20–21, where the torrent Kishon swept away the enemy. These ideas then are intertwined with the concept of the overconfident foreign king, here represented by Egypt personified, who says, “Let me rise, let me cover the earth, let me destroy cities and their inhabitants.” The same imagery underlies Dan 11:40, where the Seleucid king will advance against countries and pass through like a flood.²⁰ Sargon II (724–705 BCE) claims to have overwhelmed the settlements of allies of Merodach-Baladan and Shuturnahundu of Elam “like a flood.”²¹ Assurbanipal (668–633 BCE) describes his complete conquest of Thebes as having smashed (it as if by) a floodstorm.²² The Istanbul Stele from the reign of Nabonidus (555–539 BCE) makes reference to Marduk supplying the king of Babylon with an ally, the king of the Manda-hordes, who “swept like a flood storm, above and below, right and left, avenging Babylon in retaliation.”²³ The author of Jer 46:7–8 has drawn on imagery that relates to three standard patterns with associated meanings, thereby evoking a complex set of ideas in the minds of readers and listeners familiar with those patterns.

4.2 Ezekiel 29:1–16

The first oracle against Egypt in Ezek 29:1–16 similarly draws on three common patterns that would have evoked a set of associations in the minds of ancient hearers or readers. Here, YHWH Elohim declares he is against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great *tannîm* sprawling in the midst

19 Sebastian Grätz, “Gericht und Gnade. Die Fluterzählung im Rahmen der biblischen Urgeschichte,” in *Disaster and Relief Management in Ancient Israel/Palestine, Egypt and the Ancient Near East* (ed. A. Berlejung, A. Bagg, and G. Lehmann; FAT 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 143–58; Paul A. Krüger, “Disaster and the *topos* of the World Upside Down: Selected Cases from the Ancient Near Eastern World,” in *Disaster and Relief Management*, 391–424.

20 Carroll describes this second aspect of Nile as a representation of the Egyptian army’s pursuit of conquest and power, as well as its hubris in trying to cover the earth and destroy. He likens it to a similar depiction of Assyria in Isa 10:5–16, which specifically involves a boastful, overconfident foreign ruler (*Jeremiah*, 764). Others who note the presence of hubris in a foreign ruler, though not necessarily acknowledging this was a regular ancient Near Eastern trope, include, e.g., Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26–52 (WBC 27; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1995), 291.

21 David D. Luckenbill, *ARAB* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 2: §32 (Khorsabad Texts, 32).

22 British Museum text K228 joined to K 2676, line 68; ANET², 297a.

23 See conveniently, ANET², 309a.

of its channels, who says “My Nile is my own, since I made it for myself” (v. 3). YHWH says he will put hooks through its jaws, make all the fish of its channels stick to its scales, draw it up from its channels and hurl it into the wilderness, along with all its fish, so it will fall on the open field and become food for the beasts of the field and the birds of the air (vv. 4–5).²⁴ As a result, all the inhabitants of Egypt will know he is YHWH (29:6a). In a second set of imagery that responds to Pharaoh’s claim, “The Nile is mine since I made [it]” (v. 9), YHWH declares he is against Pharaoh and his channels and says he will make Egypt’s land into ruins, a dry waste, and a desolation, from Migdol to Syene, that is, the border of Kush,²⁵ so that no foot or beast will cross it for forty years. Egypt will be scattered among the nations (vv. 11–12), after which YHWH will restore them to the land of Pathros (Upper Egypt), but they will be a small kingdom thereafter (vv. 13–16).

Once again, the theme of the overconfident foreign king occurs, but here his hubris relates to a claim to being divine by virtue of having made the Nile (vv. 3, 9). The king of Tyre similarly claims divinity in the oracle in Ezek 28:2–10. The author’s possible possession of first or second-hand knowledge that the reigning pharaoh could be identified with the Nile river in its deified form of “Ha’py” is less important than his equation with the *tannîm/tannîn*,²⁶ the generic term for the mythical watery chaos monster YHWH was to have defeated (Isa 27:1; 51:9; Ps

24 Similar imagery occurs in Job 40:25–26 [ET 41:1–2], where Leviathan is to be drawn out with a hook and held with a nose rope.

25 The LXX adds a *waw* between Migdol and Syene. If original, this could be a copulative *waw* or a *waw* of identification, which then raises the question about whether the Migdol here is the same one mentioned in Jer 44:1 or another one. If a *waw* of identification, Migdol would be a tower located in or near Syene or could designate the nature of the site as a fort, although the final *heh* on Sewen is likely meant to be a locative *heh* rather than a feminine ending. This makes it likely that the *waw* is copulative, whether original or secondary, and that the present construction is a variation on the idiomatic *min...’ad* formulation commonly used to describe boundaries. The final phrase, “to the border/territory of Cush,” employs the expected *’ad* of the formula. For the argument these two sites represent an Egyptian convention meant to designate “all of Egypt,” from Migdol in the Delta to Syene at the first cataract, see, for example, Lawrence Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29–32* (Biblica et Orientalia 37; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1980), 42–43; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37* (AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 606.

26 For a discussion of the alternation between final *mem* and final *nun*, see conveniently Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles*, 26–27; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 601.

74:13; Job 7:12), who also is known from the Ugaritic Mythic Ba'al cycle ('nt III:34–37).²⁷ A similar image occurs subsequently in Ezek 32:2–8.

Pharaoh's close association with the Nile has prompted an association with the myth of cosmic battle in which YHWH defeats watery chaos, here envisioned as the *tannîn* monster inhabiting the channels of the Nile,²⁸ and establishes order, including law and justice. In so doing, it evokes one of two possible thought complexes. The first is a creation myth that had been part of Judah's mythic repertoire, which identified YHWH's opponent as either Yam (Sea) (Isa 51:10; Job 26:10–12; Ps 74:13), Rahab (Isa 30:7; 51:9–10; Ps 89:10–11; Job 9:13; 26:12–13), Leviathan/Lotan (Isa 27:1; Ps 74:14; Job 3:8; 40:25–26 [ET 41:1–2]; UT 67:i:1–3; and an Aramaic incantation bowl text²⁹), or *tannîn/tannîm*. The echoes of the myth in Ps 74:1 and Isa 51:9 presume a violent death for the chaos monster. The second option is a variation of the first mythic complex: a challenge to the established cosmic order made by the false claim to divine status by Pharaoh, in which YHWH must once again manifest himself as a warrior to suppress his challenger and re-establish cosmic order.³⁰ As noted by M. Wakeman, Isa 27:1, Jer 51:34,

27 Mary K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 73, 79.

28 So acknowledged, for example, by Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 27–28; Keith W. Carley, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 197; John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 93–95; Steven Tuell, *Ezekiel* (NIBC; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2009), 202–3. The mythic connection is considered but ultimately rejected in favor of a crocodile by, e.g., Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 25–48* (trans. James D. Martin; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 110–11 and is explicitly denied in favor of the interpretation of Egypt as a crocodile by John W. Wevers, *Ezekiel* (The Century Bible New Series; London: Nelson, 1969), 222–23. The use of both options simultaneously, chaos monster and crocodile, is entertained for example, by Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895), 71–75; Otto Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (BZAW 78; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1959), 148; Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (trans. Cosslett Quinn; OTL; London: SCM, 1970), 403; Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* (WBC 29; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 105; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 128–29; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 601; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 136–37; Karl Friedrich Pohlmann, *Der Prophet Hesekiel/Ezechiel Kapitel 20–48* (ATD 22.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 406.

29 James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1913), text 2; Wakeman, *God's Battle*, 67.

30 Boadt cites Ps 89:11 as a parallel to the dragging of the mythical beast out of water and its dispersal, as well as Ba'al's use of two clubs, "Driver" and "Expeller," to drive Sea from his throne and expel him in UT 68:12, 19 and the more grisly treatment of the expelled body of Mot in UT 49:II:30–35 (*Ezekiel's Oracles*, 35–36).

Ezek 29:3; Ps 44:20; and Job 7:12 seem to presume an initial battle between YHWH and the *tannîn* has taken place in which the *tannîn* was muzzled or incapacitated but not killed and that it will rise again, at which time YHWH will kill it definitively. This variant allows the current text to be the anticipated future uprising.³¹

The final pattern employed in the oracle is the enemy taunt. Here, the reference to giving the exposed body of pharaoh/*tannîm* to the beasts of the field and birds of the air echoes Goliath's taunt directed at David in 1 Sam 17:44 and David's rejoinder in 17:46 as well as the similar passage concerning *tannîn*'s fate in Ezek 32: 2–8 and, in a more summary way, in Ps 74:13–15.³² The taunt was a regular psychological tactic of intimidation.

Would this oracle have evoked the Exodus in the minds of those hearing or reading it by the late Hellenistic era, by when both the book of Ezekiel and the book of Exodus would have existed and would have been read as part of a larger collection? It is likely that it did on some level, since the view that pharaoh was a living god is presumed in the Exodus narrative as well, bringing to mind the complex of passages that deal with YHWH's attempt to eliminate other gods and idols and his insistence on Israel's loyalty to him alone. It is less likely the image of *tannîm* in the Nile would have evoked the image of the crossing of the *yam sûp* had pharaoh not been specifically equated with *tannîm*.³³ It is possible, however, that some readers would have made a connection with the larger Exodus story found between its framing bookends on some level, even without the presence of Pharaoh, since the first two plagues involve the Nile, and as indicated earlier, the Nile can in some ways be seen to serve as a bookend to the *yam sûp*.

31 Wakeman, *God's Battle*, 73, 75. One can also note that Jeremiah has used the generic, watery *tannîn* monster to represent Babylon in 51:34–44, the dangerous, oppressive empire of his time.

32 Greenberg notes that body exposure is also a standard element in treaty curses but does not state he thinks treaty violation is being alluded to here (*Ezekiel* 21–37, 603). An enemy taunt makes better sense in the context.

33 Wakeman has noted that in the HB, Rahab is peculiarly associated with Egypt and the Exodus (Isa 30:7; Ps 87:4) and is the only chaos monster, specific or generic, which is unequivocally killed. She suggests this is a deliberate move to express the significance of Israel's creation, which "depended on Egypt's defeat, just as the creation of the cosmos depended on the monster's defeat" (p. 80) (*God's Battle*, 60–63, 74, 79–80). Is she assuming the *yam sûp* is a reflex of YHWH's killing and splitting of Rahab then? Bernard Batto assumes this specifically (*Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1992], 113–18).

4.3 Zechariah 10:11

There is a direct allusion in Zech 10:11 to a second Exodus experience to take place when YHWH brings home members of the Egyptian and Assyrian diasporas (v. 10). The MT text says that he, i.e., YHWH shall pass through the sea of distress and smite the waves in the sea and dry up the depths of the Nile.³⁴ On the one hand, there is a recalling of other memories about the watery depths (*m^ešûlôt*), including the depths of the *yam sûp* in Exod 15:5 and Neh 9:11, of an unspecified sea in Mic 7:19; Ps 68:23 [ET 68:22], and Ps 107:24, of Leviathan's domain in Job 41:23 [ET 41:31], and in the pit or underworld in Ps 88:7 [ET 88:6]. On the other hand, the mention of drying up the depths, which would expose their solid foundations, recalls more specifically events at the *yam sûp* in Exod 14:16, 21–22, in spite of the use of different vocabulary, and is most similar to the memory of the same event in Neh 9:11.³⁵ This echoes (re)creation imagery more generally, where dry land emerges from watery chaos as part of the ordering of the universe, whether by drying up flood waters as in Noah's flood or by dividing waters and gathering them together to expose dry land, as in Gen 1:6–10. In Exod 15 waters are piled up, congealing the depths rather than exposing the foundational depths. Yet uniquely, YHWH here is drying up the depths of the Nile,³⁶ not the *yam sûp*. Nevertheless, by evoking the *yam sûp* and its associations and equating them with the YHWH's anticipated action in the Nile, the author is able to convey the idea that the return of the Diasporas will be a new beginning for YHWH's people.

34 The LXX has a m. pl. subject, envisioning that the returning members of the Diaspora will pass through the sea, after the waves have been struck down and the depths of the Nile dried up.

35 Others who see an allusion to the biblical *yam sûp* tradition or a wider ancient Near Eastern *Chaoskampf* motif include, e.g., Johannes Kühlewein, *Geschichte in den Psalmen* (Calwer theologische Monographien 12A.2; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1973), 134; Henning Graf Reventlow, *Die Propheten Haggai, Sacharja und Maleachi* (ATD 25.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 105; Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14* (AB 25C; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 224–27; David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9–14 & Malachi: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1995), 78. In addition to language reminiscent of the Exodus from Egypt, Edgar W. Conrad also points to language in v. 11 that evokes the destruction of Tyre and the Philistine cities in 9:1; of the casting of the army into the sea in 9:3, and the “drying up” of Ekron's hope in 9:5 (*Zechariah* [Readings; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 171).

36 Meyers and Meyers prefer to read *ye'ôr* here as a generic reference rather than a specific one to the Nile (*Zechariah 9–14*, 226), perhaps to avoid this uniqueness. But even in a generic reading, the reference would not go back specifically to the *yam sûp*.

4.4 Isaiah 37:24–25 and 2 Kings 19:23–24

Another likely reference to the Nile in the context of a taunt made by a foreign king occurs twice, in Isa 37:24–25 and in 2 Kgs 19:23–24. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, has mocked the holy one of Israel by having his messengers claim on his behalf, “With my many chariots I ascend the heights of the mountains, the furthest reaches of Lebanon; I cut down its highest cedars, its choicest cypress, and I enter its remotest shelters, its most luxurious forests. I dig up and I drink foreign waters, and I dry up with the sole of my foot all the rivers of [Lower] Egypt.”³⁷ While some have re-divided the consonants in the final two words of v. 25 to read *y’rym šwr*, “the mountain stream” or “streams from rocks,” which eliminates any reference to Egypt,³⁸ there is no need to abandon the MT word division, which makes good sense as it stands. The rare use of the singular designation *Mašor* instead of the usual dual form *Mišrayim* to designate Egypt may signal that the boast was limited to control over the Nile Delta in Lower Egypt and did not include Upper Egypt.³⁹ The singular form is found elsewhere in Isaiah in 19:6 in an

37 For this translation and a discussion of the verb sequencing, see the contribution in this volume by William Morrow, “Water Control and Royal Propaganda.” I prefer to construe the construct chain *kp p’mi* all in the singular, “the sole of my foot,” which is consistent with the MT consonantal text, even if the Masoretes pointed the second term as a dual/plural. The verbs were construed as perfects in the LXX translation; if those in v. 25 were to be construed as perfects of certainty, then the historical problems the claims pose could be smoothed over, since they likely reflect the actions of Sennacherib’s successor Esarhaddon; so, e.g., John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (2d ed.; OTL; London: SCM, 1970), 691; Joseph Robinson, *The Second Book of Kings* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 186; Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale OT Commentaries; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 228.

38 See, for example, Calderone, “Rivers of ‘Mašor,’” 424–26; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC 25; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 39–40. Calderone construes the *mem* as enclitic *mem*, which is known to be an element that can break a construct chain. Watts notes that *m-š-w-r* could also be read “from a rock,” assuming the few examples of a break in a construct chain created by the preposition *min*. There is no need, however, to “fix” what is not broken to begin with by adopting either proposed alternative. For the grammar, see conveniently, Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Biblical Languages: Hebrew 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 194–95.

39 As noted by Gray, this is preferable to construing *mašor* to refer to a fortress, since “the rivers of the fortress” does not yield much sense; nor does the Vulgate’s reading, “dammed rivers” (*I & II Kings*, 689 n. e). Nevertheless, Donald J. Wiseman opts for the reading “the rivers of besieged places,” apparently construing *mašor* to be a collective noun (*1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* [Tyndale OT Commentaries; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993], 282).

oracle against Egypt, in the parallel passage to 37:25 in 2 Kgs 19:24, and twice in Mic 7:12.

H. Tawil has made a sustained argument that Maşor refers to Mount Muşri in the mountains northeast of Nineveh, from where Sennacherib diverted water via canals to irrigate orchards on the north side of the city, not to Egypt.⁴⁰ His discussion is not without problems, however. He fails to explain why the boast would move from accomplishments in securing cedar in the mountains of Lebanon to “draining” (for “drying up”) streams at the foot of Mt. Muşur back home, which created abundant flowing waters from which Sennacherib was able to drink after digging canals to bring the water to Nineveh.⁴¹ There is a problem in the resulting logic of draining or drying up a water source to create a flowing canal; it will not flow for very long! He sees the expression *bkp p'my*, “sole[s] of my feet,” to be a Hebrew idiom meaning “by much hard work” because it suits his own contextual reconstruction.⁴² It use only here and in the parallel in 2 Kgs 19 makes it a *hapax*, so it might be an idiom but need not mean what he suggests and is probably best construed in the singular: “the sole of my foot.” More problematically, he cannot explain how the use of the identical expression, *y'ry mšwr*, in Isa 19:6 in a clear context of an oracle against Egypt would mean “streams of Mt. Muşri.”

The two uses of *maşor* in Mic 7:12, which describe the gathering of the Diaspora from Assyria and the cities of Maşor to Jerusalem, can hardly have Mt. Muşri in mind either. The phrasing employs the standard boundary idiom *min...ad* four times. In the first instance, Assyria is paralleled with the cities of Maşor as “from” sources and the possibility that Maşor could mean Mt. Muşri would be possible, though its representing Egypt would be equally possible. However, in its second occurrence, where Maşor is the southernmost boundary from where the people will return, and “the River,” almost certainly the Tigris that flowed through the heartland of Assyria and its capital Nineveh, is the northernmost boundary, Mt. Muşri is eliminated as a viable option in favor of Egypt. Two more generic sets of boundaries follow: “[to] sea from sea” and “[to] mountain from mountain,” which reinforce the view that opposite ends of the known world were in mind in all the examples.

40 Hayim Tawil, “The Historicity of 2 Kgs 19:24 (=Isaiah 37:25): The Problem of Ye’orê Mâşôr,” *JNES* 41 (1982): 195–206.

41 *Ibid.*, 201 nn. 30–31. A logical case can be made, but he has not done so.

42 *Ibid.*, 201 n. 32.

Tawil's study highlights in the end the problematic historicity of this boast that has been remembered in biblical tradition to have been uttered by Sennacherib, even though it makes more historical sense in the context of Esarhaddon's reign.⁴³ The evidence for the latter is detailed in the next paragraph. The current study is interested in memory, not historical accuracy, however, so what the Nile evokes and how it does so in the parallel passages in Isa 37:24–25 and 2 Kgs 19:23–24 will be the focus, not its possible transfer from one Assyrian monarch to another within biblical tradition.

The wording of the boast echoes typical Assyrian royal bravado found in Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions and annals.⁴⁴ As noted by W. A. M. Beuken, it has Sennacherib boast to have gone from the highest peaks in Lebanon to underground wells and waters to Egypt's streams in the lowlands of the Delta, all of which now fall under his authority— from the highest to the lowest parts of the natural world.⁴⁵ In particular, the claim to have dug wells is similar to Esar-

43 So noted by, e.g., Thomas K. Cheyne, *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1895), 221–22, who considers it more in keeping with Esarhaddon or Asshurbanipal; Georg Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja 2. Kapitel 24–39* (ZBK; Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1962), 176, who notes the first successful Assyrian entrance was not until some decades after Sennacherib; Otto Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja. Kapitel 13–39* (ATD 18; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Reuprecht, 1973), 314, who specifies successors but not Esarhaddon explicitly; Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings* (CC OT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 378. Any attempt to link it to Herodotus' claim that Sennacherib reached Pelusium (2.141) would reflect a determination to ensure the historicity of the biblical text.

44 See, e.g., Gwilym H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings, Vol. 2: 1 Kings 17:1–2 Kings 25:30* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984), 579; Richard D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox, 1987), 240; Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 243; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 275. But it is to be noted the trend is not limited to the ninth, eighth, and the first half of the seventh centuries BCE, as Cogan and Tadmor imply, but continues in the late seventh and first half of the sixth centuries BCE as well; see, for example, the Wadi Brisa inscription of Nebuchadrezzar II (605–562 BCE) about his expedition to Syria (ANET², 307a). They cite as examples, A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, Vol. 2: From Tiglath-pileser I to Ashur-nasir-apli II* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976), §544, 546, 557, 561, 565 (all Ashurnasirpal II [ca. 883–859 BCE]); Luckenbill, *Ancient Records*, II, §54, 118, 142 (Sargon II [ca. 722–705 BCE]), §244–45 (Sennacherib [ca. 705–681 BCE]), and §557 (Esarhaddon [ca. 680–669 BCE]). See also Peter Machinist, "Assyria and its Image in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 719–37.

45 Willem A. M. Beuken, *Isaiah Vol 2: Isaiah Chapters 28–39* (trans. Brian Doyle; HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 366. The fact that the claim is phrased in terms of having tamed nature vs. having conquered the nations of the world, prompting YHWH's response, is emphasized by, e.g., Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah Vol. 2: Chapters 19 to 39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1969), 491; Robert L. Cohn, *2 Kings*

haddon's claim to have provided his troops with water from wells while traversing the coastal plain of the southern Levant en route to Egypt; he was the first Assyrian king to reach Egypt, in 671 BCE.⁴⁶ The reference to the drying up of the [Nile] branches with the sole (singular) of his foot (repoint as singular, which is consistent with the final consonant) on the other hand, plays off the Assyrian image of placing foreign nations under the soles of the ruler's feet.⁴⁷ It adds a specific biblical twist, however, in having him claim to dry up the Nile. This could be a possible allusion to the *yam sūp* of the Exodus,⁴⁸ in which YHWH's ability to save his own people is meant to reinforce his plans to save Jerusalem from Sennacherib's siege in the immediate literary context. Alternatively, it could echo the concept in Job 38:4 and Isa 51:13 of YHWH being the one who can lay and then expose the foundations of the earth more generally.⁴⁹ Might the latter option include perhaps the turning upside down of an annual Egyptian ceremony in which Pharaoh stepped into the Nile as it began to flood?⁵⁰ If so, it

(Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 137. Here Sennacherib sounds as though he is claiming divine abilities. In the reference to having penetrated wooded peaks of Lebanon, Kaiser sees a possible allusion to the king and his troops having entered the garden of God (Ezek 28:13) (*Jesaja* 13–39, 314).

- 46 See Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 237; ANET², 292b: "By means of cords, chains (and) buckets I had to provide water for my army by drawing from wells" because "from Apku in the region of Samaria to the town of Rapihu (in) the region adjacent to the 'Brook of Egypt' there is no river (all the way)!" (Esarhaddon, Prism B, 6 obverse-18 reverse). Subsequently, Assurbanipal boasted that after marching into distant lands, his soldiers "dug for water to quench their thirst," so this aspect was not unique to any single Assyrian king (Luckenbill, *Records*, II, §823).
- 47 For the suggestion it builds on the image of blocking the flow of the Nile into an irrigation channel with a heap of soil made by a farmer's foot, here boastfully applied to Sennacherib, who claims he can dam up and prevent the flow of the Nile itself, see Motyer, *Isaiah*, 228. S. H. Widyapranawa, on the other hand, sees it as a metaphor for the Assyrian army (*Isaiah* 1–39 [ITC; Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1990], 246).
- 48 Also suggested by Kaiser, *Jesaja* 13–39, 314, citing Isa 51:10; Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 240; Widyapranawa, *Isaiah* 13–39, 246.
- 49 So similarly, e.g., Ronald E. Clements, *Isaiah* 1–39 (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1980), 86; Beuken, *Isaiah*, 366, who sees the claim to have water and drought at his disposal to move from royal boasting to blasphemy.
- 50 Interestingly, Hans Wildberger has seen the text to be a challenge to the authority of Pharaoh, whose job was to guarantee the annual inundation, by the Assyrian king, who is claiming to have dried up the Nile instead (*Jesaja* [BKAT 10.17, 18; Neukirchen zum Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981], 1432. On the left bank of the Nile at Silsiliya are three inscribed stone monuments for the worship of Hapy, including an offering list. They date to the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties (1350–1190 BCE). Pharaoh is shown making offerings at two Nile festivals, held on Ipip 15 and Thoth 15, where the river was narrow and powerful. See Catherine Ruth Smith, "Egyptian Deities and their Festivals" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1932), 61.

would be intended to demonstrate it is YHWH who ultimately controls the Nile, not Pharaoh, and he can dry it up or make it flood.

4.5 Amos 9:5

A fifth image that uses the Nile is found in Amos 9:5. Together with v. 6, it serves as a hymnic strophe that concludes a series of five visions that culminate in 9:1–4, explaining how the judgment against the temple at Bethel and the kingdom of Israel will be carried out.⁵¹ In v. 5 YHWH Sebaot is portrayed as the source of both coming death and life. He can make the earth sway (root *m-w-g*) by striking or afflicting it (verb *n-g-ʿ*), causing those living in it to mourn; yet, he also can make it rise and fall like the Nile, which brings fertility and restores life. Earthquake imagery is typical of divine theophany (Nah 1:5; Ps 104:32; 97: 4–5);⁵² v. 5 is threatening direct divine action by YHWH to punish the nation of Israel.

In spite of proposals to see the “touching/striking” action and resultant “melting/shaking” to refer to lightning accompanied by thunder and possibly storm,⁵³ or to the use of a metallurgic analogy in which the earth will “melt” back into its elemental substance(s) that can then be poured into a crucible to create the final form of earth and heaven,⁵⁴ the reference here is most logically to an earthquake, as most scholars

51 So William Rainey Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (ICC 24; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1905), 186; James L. Mayes, *Amos* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1969), 151–52; Hans W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos* (trans. Waldemar Janzen; S. Dean McBride, Jr., and Charles A. Muenchow; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977 [1969]), 337–38, 341–42; Robert Martin-Achard, *God's People in Crisis: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (ITC; Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1984), 62; John H. Hayes, *Amos the Eighth Century Prophet: His Times & His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 217.

52 See Diana Edelman, “Earthquakes in the Ancient Southern Levant: A Literary Topos and a Problem Requiring Architectural Solutions,” in *Disaster and Relief Management* (ed. Angelika Berlejung; FAT 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 205–38.

53 So, e.g., Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 190, who suggests three options: lightning, storm, or earthquake, on the basis of Ps 46:6; 97:5; 104:32; 144:5; Nah 1:5; Mic 1:4; Judg 5:4; Ps 75:3; Richard S. Cripps, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929), 261. Cripps prefers earthquake imagery in the end. It should be noted that thunder and lightning, components of storm imagery, are also common accompaniments of divine theophany like earthquake, so this suggestion is not as far-fetched as some might find it.

54 So, e.g., Theodore H. Robinson, “Amos,” in *Die zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (ed. Theodore H. Robinson and Friedrich Horst; 3d ed.; HAT 1.14; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964), 71–108 (105).

acknowledge.⁵⁵ It already has been used in 8:8 and 9:1. Earthquake imagery asserts YHWH's irregular, harmful control over nature that affects the inhabitants of the earth adversely, probably causing destruction and death that prompts a response of mourning. At the same time, however, in its immediate context, it portends a new divine theophany, in which YHWH will punish those who resist or challenge him. The anticipated negative, divinely caused disaster is then likened to or contrasted with the entire earth rising and falling like the annual inundation of the Nile. The second half of the verse has two possible interpretations. It is commonly understood to provide a parallel image of the earth undulating and heaving during the predicted quake, like the rise of the Nile in its regular inundation and then subsidence, resulting in the same negative result—death and mourning.⁵⁶ However, since the Nile's annual flooding is a regular natural phenomenon controlled by YHWH, which ultimately brings fertility and life, this second image could also be meant to point to an anticipated punishment in the wake of divine manifestation, in which the death of some caught in the flood waters is necessary in order to gain new life and blessing for the survivors.

Verse 6 then continues and expands the water imagery already used, asserting other ways that YHWH controls this vital, life-sustaining element. It refers to YHWH's control of the heavenly vault and upper chambers, which elsewhere are said to contain rain alongside winds, hail, and snow (Deut 28:12; Jer 10:13; Job 38:22–23; Ps 135:7) and then says he “calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth.” The latter phrase could refer to the release of cosmic waters stored above⁵⁷ or below⁵⁸ the earth (Gen 1:6, 9–

55 So, e.g., Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel–Amos–Obadja–Jona* (KAT 13.2; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1971), 247; James L. Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation of Divine Justice: The Doxologies of Amos and Related Texts in the Old Testament* (SBLDS 24; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1975), 135; Hayes, *Amos*, 218; Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Amos* (ATD 24.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 127.

56 The logical progression between the two halves of v. 5 has been found to be unclear. Mayes finds the comparison of an earthquake to the Nile's annual states “hardly appropriate” (*Amos*, 155); Julius Wellhausen had similarly noted how poor the analogy was when commenting on its first occurrence in 8:8, since the flooding and subsidence of the Nile takes place over two months while an earthquake lasts only a few minutes (*Die Kleinen Propheten* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963], 93). For Rudolph, however, the juxtaposition is to be explained precisely by assuming a rolling and heaving of the earth in a protracted earthquake that lasts months, not minutes (*Joel–Amos*, 247). Martin-Achard asks if the Nile's inundation is meant also to allude to an earthquake but is not certain (*Amos*, 64).

57 So Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 116, as one of three options; Mayes, *Amos*, 155; Rudolph, *Joel–Amos*, 247; Martin-Achard, *Amos*, 64.

10). This verse confirms YHWH's control over chaotic watery elements but in a way that leaves ambiguous whether he is sending rain that will yield crops and blessing or whether he is unleashing a flood that will once again cover the earth as in the days of Noah, in spite of his promise not to do so again.⁵⁹ There does not appear to be any intended allusion to the Exodus tradition or ancestral traditions here in the logical thought unit expressed in vv. 5–6. The writer has heard of the annual inundation of the Nile and knows or assumes it is considered a life-sustaining event, even if some death is inevitable during the flooding process.

However, there is a direct mention of the Exodus in the succeeding v. 7, where YHWH declares, "Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir? This verse is asserting YHWH's control over the nations more generally, as a universal god, not a particularistic one,⁶⁰ which complements the depiction in the preceding vv. 5–6 of his control over nature and the cosmos. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of this latter claim with the preceding reference to the annual life cycle of the Nile suggests that the Nile was easily equated with Egypt more generally, and that within the circle that produced, read and reread this prophetic book, both on its own and in the context of other literature, "Egypt" tended to trigger an association with the foundational memory of the group that self-identified as Israel.

4.6 Nahum 3:8

In Nah 3:8, Thebes, called by its native name No-Amon, "city of Amon," is used in a taunt⁶¹ against Nineveh as a historical example of a

58 So, e.g., Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 116; Jeremias, *Prophet Amos*, 127, who references Ps 24:2 and 104:3.

59 The latter option is favored by Harper, who thinks the waters are intended to evoke Noah's flood, "the most terrible punishment in history," because of the use of the expressions "call" and "face of the earth." In his view, this part of the verse would be intended to convey the idea that the forces of nature are at YHWH's command and "may become as destructive as they have been beneficent" (*Amos and Hosea*, 116). A possible allusion to the flood, presumably the catastrophic one in Genesis, is also considered possible by Robinson, "Amos," 105; Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmation*, 135; Jeremias, *Prophet Amos*, 128.

60 This claim does not eliminate the possible view that Israel might be considered "first among equals" but does counter any claims it has a special relationship in contrast to other nations.

61 So Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Nahum–Malachi* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox, 1986), 26.

great capital city that was captured by enemies in spite of feeling impregnable. M. A. Sweeney, developing an idea expressed earlier by J. J. M. Roberts, argues that parallels between the two cities are drawn to reinforce the analogy and drive home the point that Nineveh will suffer the same fate as Thebes. Sweeney understands the description of Thebes as surrounded by water, which is factually inaccurate,⁶² to be based on Nineveh's situation on the Khusur canal surrounded by watery moats;⁶³ Roberts had earlier seen parallels between powerful fortifications and great moats.⁶⁴ Thebes was located on the east bank of the Nile, not on an island in its midst. The only references to water in the description of Nineveh occur in Nah 2:7 and 9 [ET 2:6 and 8], which mention river gates that are opened and then describes Nineveh like a pool of water, some of whose waters are fleeing. A pool of water is land-locked, while an island is "water-locked." If the author's intention were to reinforce his analogy through parallel description, he has not done this in an obvious way.

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- 62 Many have recognized the lack of factual accuracy; so, e.g., Samuel R. Driver, *The Minor Prophets: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (The Century Bible; Edinburgh: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1906), 40; John M. P. Smith, "Nahum," in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel* (ed. John M. P. Smith, William H. Ward, and Julius A. Bewer; ICC 25; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911): 266–363 (342); John H. Eaton, *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah: Introduction and Commentary* (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM, 1961), 74; Karl Elliger, *Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten II: Die Propheten Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Sacharja, Maleachi* (ATD 25.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 21; John D. W. Watts, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 119; Ralph L. Smith, *Micah–Malachi* (WBC 32; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1984), 88. Wilhelm Rudolph notes that the author of the description could not have known the city firsthand and believes the reference to being in the midst of the water is a later textual addition by a scribe who had Alexandria in mind (*Micha–Nahum–Habakkuk–Zephaniah* [KAT 13.3; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975]), 181, 184 n. 2. An equation with Alexandria was made in the Targum, Midrash Rabba, and by Jerome; see Duane L. Christiansen, *Nahum* (AB 24F; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 354–55.
- 63 Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets, Vol. 2: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 445. Sweeney's claim that the Nile ran through the center of Thebes is not fully accurate; the city, including the temple complexes at Luxor and Karnak, was on the eastern side of the Nile, while the necropolis was on the western side. The latter was not an integral quarter of the city, but a separate area outside it.
- 64 Jimmy Jack M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 74. His observations may well build on those made by John M. P. Smith, who suggested there might have been great moats around Thebes like there might have been around Memphis, which filled with flood-waters from the inundation of the Nile in some years, and if so, the defenses must have been remarkably similar to those at Nineveh ("Nahum," 342).

In addition, it is not clear if an ancient observer of Nineveh would have viewed the city to have the appearance of an island, even with the watery city moat that traced alongside the northern and eastern sides of the city. The Tigris lay nearby the western city wall, but no moat has yet been discerned there, though the ancient riverbed may have been closer to the city wall than it is today, which would have eliminated the need for a separate moat. It is equally unclear what was happening on the southern end of the city wall or how much of the city's circumference was reinforced by the outer defensive wall that lay beyond the moat on the eastern side of the city. The full course of the wall has not yet been determined. Sweeney's suggestion is unable to be verified on the ground at this point in time but is not well supported in the biblical text either.

Sennacherib undertook massive hydraulic works in and around Nineveh between ca. 704 and 690 BCE, which might have made the city and its surrounding fields and parks famous, but whether they would have reinforced an impression that the city sat like an island in the midst of multiple canals, rivers, and streams remains conjecture. The works included a canal from the Khosur River at the site of Kisiri, some 17 km away, a royal park, subsidiary canals and ditches running off the main canal that watered orchards north of the city that were part of a land-grant system; an artificial swamp to absorb high water from the canal in the spring; the canal and reservoir system that brought spring water from Mount Muşri (Jabal Bashiqa) some 20 km northeast of the city to water external northern fields in conjunction with water from the Khosur, two additional royal parks, and another canal system that dammed up the waters of the Gomel River, a tributary of the Khosur whose sources lay in the Kurdish mountains, at the village of Khinis, and which included a stretch of aqueduct near Jerwan. This latter system is the only known one that could have provided water to the area south of Nineveh, even though its specific lay-out has not yet been fully recovered.⁶⁵ Parts of the canal systems have been traced, and a stretch of aqueduct has been discovered at Jerwan. Thus, Sweeney's proposal remains unverifiable and not compelling.

65 For details, see, e.g., Thorkild Jacobsen and Seton Lloyd, *Sennacherib's Aqueduct at Jerwan* (OIP 24; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 31–43; Tawil, "Historicity of 2 Kgs 19:24," 196–201; Ariel M. Bagg, "Irrigation," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Daniel T. Potts; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012): 261–78 (275–77). For preliminary information about the use of declassified satellite images to trace the canals, see <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2006/03.16/11-canal.html>

The description of Thebes in Nah 3:8 parallels more closely that of Tyre in Ezek 27–28 than that of Nineveh elsewhere in Nahum. Both Thebes and Tyre are said to be located in the midst of water so that the sea becomes a virtual rampart and water a protecting wall. Given the factual inaccuracy in the case of Thebes, two explanations are immediately evident. The first is that the author of Nah 3:8 was using stereotypical language to describe an imagined far-away, famous site associated with a perennial river or the Mediterranean, where it might be located on an island.⁶⁶ The second is that he was intending to create a deliberate link in the mind of the listeners between Tyre and Thebes, to forge associative links in the shared social memory to reinforce common evocative images and values attached to both. This option would add a further dimension to the stated comparison being made between the fate of Thebes and Nineveh in the book of Nahum. By evoking wider associations within the collection of books being read and reread, the values assigned to Tyre in social memory could also be applied to Nineveh.

One could ask if the imagery of Thebes as an island derives from Egyptian creation imagery of the primal mound emerging from the flood-waters,⁶⁷ which would imply authorial or editorial knowledge of some Egyptian cosmology. However, this myth was primarily associated with the god Atum, whose primary seat was Heliopolis,⁶⁸ not

66 Carl-A. Keller, "Nahoum," in *Michée, Nahoum, Habacuc, Sophonie* (ed. René Vuilleumier and Carl-A. Keller; Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament 11b; Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1971), 101–34 (130) suggests in a similar vein that this is a stock image of an Egyptian city, surrounded by branches of the Nile and the sea, rather than a description of Thebes *per se*.

67 So, e.g., Eaton, *Obadiah-Zephaniah*, 74, who argues the Egyptians considered Thebes, the supreme sacred city of Egypt, to have been founded, like the universe itself, upon the primeval waters that manifested as the Nile. He thinks the biblical writer used the Theban tradition ironically to represent royal arrogance against YHWH. He apparently is followed by Watts, *Books of Joel-Zephaniah*, 119. Neither notes that the Egyptian creation myth they think is being assumed is associated with the deity of Heliopolis, not Thebes. Others have seen instead an allusion to the primeval conflict between YHWH and the waters of chaos: so, e.g., Alfred Haldar, *Studies in the Book of Nahum* (Uppsala Universitets Årskrift 1946:7; Uppsala; Lundequista Bokhandeln, 1947), 139; Richard J. Coggins, "In Wrath Remember Mercy: A Commentary on the Book of Nahum," in *Israel Among the Nations: A Commentary on the Books of Nahum and Obadiah* (ed. Richard J. Coggins and S. Paul Re'emi; ITC; Edinburgh: The Hand-sel Press, 1985), 1–63 (52).

68 See conveniently, Manfred Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt: An Illustrated Dictionary* (trans. Barbara Cummings; London: Thames & Hudson, 1980), 31; Karol Mysliwiec, "Atum," in *The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion* (ed. Donald B. Redford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 25–26; Marie-Astrid Calmettes, *La création de monde dans l'Égypte ancienne* (collection Chercheurs d'art;

Amun, whose historical seat was Thebes.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, since Amun gained ascendancy in the Egyptian pantheon as Thebes gained political prominence, conceivably, the myth of creation could have been transferred to him by a non-specialist, Judean “outsider” scribe whom might have known of the myth and associated it with the most notable solar Egyptian deity of his day. Such an understanding is not compelling, however.

Isaiah 33:21 might conjure a similar insular image to describe YHWH’s city, Zion. In v. 20, Zion is a quiet habitation, an immovable tent whose stakes will never be pulled up and none of whose ropes will be broken. Verse 21 then says, “there [in Zion], YHWH is or will be for us a place of rivers, channels or ‘a Nile,’ with broad ‘hands’ where no galley with oars or strong ship can pass over to us.” The description evokes the image of an island protected by water that cannot be easily navigated to gain access to the land in its midst. This use adds weight to the possibility that the insular motif was a standard trope that could be applied to any city to evoke a sense of impregnability and safety.

4.7 Isaiah 19

Finally, in Isaiah, the Nile is remembered as the source of sown grain (19:7; 23:3) of fish for food (19:8), of reeds and rushes for basketry (19:6) and of flax for linen (19:9). YHWH is to visit Egypt and reverse the life-giving and life-supporting function of the river; the waters of the Nile will be dried up and the river will be parched and dry. Its streams will become foul-smelling and the channels of Egypt will become thin and dry up so that reeds and rushes will rot away. As a result, there will be bare places beside the Nile, on its banks, and all the sown area of the Nile will dry up, be destroyed, and cease to exist. The fishermen who cast hooks in the Nile will mourn and those who spread nets on the water will languish; the workers in flax will despair and the carders

Paris: Musée de Louvre, 2003), 8–27; Wilkinson, *Gods of Egypt*, 17–18, 98–101; Corteggiani, *l’Égypte ancienne*, 63–66.

69 At Thebes, the god Amun was seen to have manifested himself in the form of two serpents at the origin of the universe; see Lurker, *Gods and Symbols*, 25–26; Vincent Ariele Tobin, “Amun and Amun-Re,” in *The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion* (ed. Donald B. Redford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 18–21; Calmettes, *Création du monde*, 35; Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods*, 92–97; Corteggiani, *l’Égypte ancienne*, 29–32. Otherwise, he was “the hidden one,” the force in the wind. It was only in the New Kingdom (ca. 1550–1070 BCE), as god of the capital of Thebes, that he attained the position of supreme god, under the form of Amun-Re, in which he was identified with the sun-god Re.

and weavers will grow pale and be aggrieved (19:5–10). The Nile will become a source of dearth, not plenty, and death, not life. Amidst this prosaic description of life lived beside and drawn from a perennial river is an assertion that YHWH, as the universal god, controls the functioning of natural phenomena over the face of the entire known world of the time.

5. Conclusion

The Nile is an outside place that, through its contrastive “otherness,” in most cases helps define what is inside for the religious community of Israel. From the Israelite insiders’ view, while it can be alluring (Gen 13; 41; Num 11), it is chaos that must be tamed and ordered by YHWH, even if from an insider Egyptian view, it is orderly, with a predictable rhythm that sustains life, industry, and trade. From a universalizing perspective, however, it is a force or feature of nature that YHWH controls, and while it might be a foreign land in relation to YHWH’s two former kingdoms of Israel and Judah, it also can be remembered and accepted by some to lie within the extended boundaries the deity has allotted to Abraham’s descendants, where a Judean or Israelite Diaspora may legitimately live and, by virtue of their presence, bring blessing and abundance to all the clans (*mišpāḥôṭ*) of the cultivated soil, under whatever empire system may prevail (Gen 12:3), or to the various political units (*gôyîm*) of the earth (Gen 22:18).

Polluted, Bitter, and Sweet Water as a Matter of Ethnic Identity-Formation in Persian Yehud

KÅRE BERGE

1. Summary of my argument

In her 1973 book, *God's Battle with the Monster*, Mary K. Wakeman describes how the myth of the battle with the sea monster underlies the Exodus story. By paying attention to the function of the word קֹחַ with the meaning of "limit, law, regulation, allotted portion" or the like, in a number of references to this battle myth, she concludes that the resolution of the battle is not only the "splitting" of the sea monster, but also the fundamental distinction between the victor and the vanquished:

The monster is by definition irregular, irrational, erratic, lacking positive intention. God differs from the monster in one respect that is never accepted, and that is that he (who is the law) regulates the exercise of his powers. The reality that is God is by definition intended, and legal.¹

I think this is a good starting-point for studying the function of water in the ethnic identity-formation in the Exodus story. The idea of bitter and sweet water is, of course, from the Mara episode in Exod 15:22–26. The verses 25–26 speak about God setting קֹחַ וּמִשְׁפָּט, law and judgment, and it is followed by the succeeding admonitions about keeping his commandments and statutes. The notion of God being the healer of the people, רֹפֵא (your healer) refers to this picture of the God who heals through setting limits and regulates the exercise of the power of the monster, and thus defining Israel's identity. As in all definitions of identity, this implies morality and ethics.

My point is the didactical functionality of "water" in the exodus story in creating a post-exilic "ethnic identity." It is clear from Ezekiel 29 and 32 that the mythic element of the sea monster did play a role in the process of "bordering" and "othering" in the concept of identity in

1 Mary K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 138. Modified, but basically the same conclusion in J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

exilic or post-exilic literature (Egypt or Pharaoh is denoted as *tannin* in Ezek 29:3 and 32:2); and the idea of salty water getting fresh (וַיִּמְתְּקוּ הַמַּיִם) is a part of the eschatological temple-vision in Ezek 48:8; and Zech 14:8 presents a similar vision, speaking of “living water” (מַיִם-חַיִּים). The post-exilic psalms recounting the history of Israel refer either to the plagues (Psalm 105) or to the sea episode (Psalms 106 and 136). In Psalm 136, God’s splitting of the water is a part of his wise world-order.

I want to draw attention away from the production-side of the text onto the reception-side of it, which in this case means its pragmatic ability to create emotions, acceptance, or possibility of resistance. This is no reception-historical study, but a study of elements in the text itself, which can create these kinds of sensibility on the receivers’ side. In this regard, one cannot look exclusively at the concluding and explicit admonitions in v. 26.

It is clear that the post-exilic community that produced the final version of this text was a text-centered community. Corresponding to this, those scholars who have studied the expressions in Exod 15:26, assert that it refers to the kind of “Torah didacticism” which we find in Deuteronomy. As I have shown in another article, the “book didacticism” of that book, which appeals to the literati, i.e., the scribal elite, differs in substantial ways from the picture that appears in the Exodus story.² In the Exodus text, the so-called didactical or catechetical passages in chapters 12 and 13 link to rituals; and in Exod 10:2 it refers to story-telling. The only exception of importance is just the final words in Exod 15:26.

So, even when the text-producing community was a book-community, this does not mean that their mindshare or social mindscape was confined to the texts. When ethnic and moral identity-formation includes prescriptions of rituals and narrations of the magic and of the myth of the monster-battle, and with ideas of water, the resulting social mindscape is based on episodic memory just as well as it is based on semantic memory. Semantic memory might, if we follow Harvey Whitehouse, be connected with what he calls the doctrinal mode of depersonalized religious experiences, while episodic memory likewise is knowledge that is recalled in the context of one’s own past experiences. This is also what he calls imagistic religion, which is open to a rich idiosyncratic exegesis. Even when we do not follow

2 K. Berge, “Literacy, Utopia and Memory: Is There a Public Teaching in Deuteronomy?,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12 (2012) article 3, available online at www.jhsonline.org.

Whitehouse to the end,³ it can be concluded that an imprint of an ethnic and moral identity, basically through a mythically related narrative connected to family rituals, does not reinforce a single meaning but rather, allows individuals—or at least individual families—to assign personal meaning when participating in the rituals' event of narration. In this regard Exodus differs from Deuteronomy which makes the same rituals subject to centrally controlled celebrations.

2. Theories of Ethnic and National Identity

Ethnic identity is a boundary phenomenon.⁴ It is also a constructed and invented entity. However, it seems equally clear that in *ethno-symbolism*, i.e., nationality and ethnicity as investigated from within the *Geisteswissenschaften*, there is an emotional element.⁵ It is this symbolic-emotional element of ethnic identity that is the focus in this paper. It has also been said that ethnic identity requires the maintenance of sufficiently consistent *behavior*.⁶ At the core of ethno-symbolism lies the myth of "ethnic chosenness" and cultural distinctiveness with its moral values and goals. My theoretical presuppositions for this study of the Exodus story as an instance of ethno-symbolism are these:

1) It has been claimed that "ethnicities and shared political identities were defined by cult activities throughout the Mediterranean world in the archaic period. The matrix of gods, heroes, and cults, and cult sites are seen to be sacred representations of peoples to be guarded

3 Harvey Whitehouse and Luther H. Martin, *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History, and Cognition* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2004). With a number of articles that are critical to, or modify, his concepts.

4 This is clear since Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1969).

5 For a comprehensive presentation, see D. Conversi in *Nationalism and Ethno-symbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations* (ed. A. S. Leoussi; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 73 states "that many authors have scant respect for the psychological and emotional hold that ethnonational identity has upon the group." And similarly p. 75: "It might well be asked why scholars have been so slow to discover what the masses have felt" (this is related to modern cultures, written in 1984; it has changed after that).

6 A. P. Royce, *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982). She links the kind of ethnic identity that I deal with in this paper to the notions of Perception and Purpose. Ethnic identity requires the acquisition of an ethnic imagery with the presence of "others;" (p. 12): "Without this contrast, ethnic identity does not exist."

from the desecrations of strangers and enemies ...”⁷ This explains the presence of predications of rituals in the Exodus narrative.

2) It has been noted, admittedly with regard to modern state formations, that particularly formative of identity is the idea of “blood-sacrifice” for the nation, understood as a rite of passage.⁸ Exodus does not correspond exactly to this, but there is innocent genocide, a number of elements related to rites of passage especially connected with water, and blood.

3) National bond is subconscious and emotional.⁹

4) Even when the collective memories of the “ethnic / national past” may be transmitted by canonical texts, there is, according to A. D. Smith, a special weight on the oral traditions of the family, clan or community and its religious specialists.¹⁰

5) It has repeatedly been pointed out that creations of national or ethnic myths (again in modernity) succeeded because they combined the elitist capacities of literary mastery and traditional discourses.¹¹ It is easily imaginable that when the elite literati of the Persian time wrote down and / or edited the final version of the exodus narrative, they had to play on traditional discourses.

7 S. Garman in Leoussi, *History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

8 J. Hutchinson in *ibid.* 44–45. See also his article in M. Guibernau and J. Hutchinson, eds., *History and National Destiny: Ethnosymbolism and its Critics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004). Esp. pp. 115–21. He too points to the importance of morality, even moral innovation, in the construction of national myths. Interestingly, when C. Westermann wrote his OT theology, his only concept of the Israelite wars was in the form of *Rettung*. The conquest wars are not discussed. This even constituted the idea of *Geschichte* in his theology. I shall not reflect on his reasons for this, but it corresponds to Hutchinson’s presentation of the function of warfare in the remembrance of national identity.

9 *Ibid.*, 204.

10 Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 208.

11 See, again, Hutchinson in Guibernau and Hutchinson, *History and National Destiny*. 118. The following citation is from p. 120. This theme has been dealt with also by E. Ben Zvi, “On Social Memory and Identity Formation in Late Persian Yehud,” in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (ed. Louis Jonker; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

3. Exod 15:22–26: Basic exegetical observations

The episode in Exod 15:22–26 about the bitter waters at Mara becoming sweet is one of four similar stories dealing with water (the others are Exod 17:1–7; Num 20:2–13; and 2 Kgs 2:19–22). Numbers 20 is a Priestly text; and the magical character of the staff is evident, as in the P plague story. Exodus 17:1–7 is non-P. The magical realm is also present in this text; but it is softened by the remark that the Lord stands “in front of” Moses. It is also softened in Exod 15:22–26 by “the Lord showed him וַיִּנְהַיֵּם a piece of wood.” This weakening of the magical is typical also to the non-P plague episodes.¹²

In the Elisha story, the water is bad (רָעִים) but salt makes it wholesome (וַיִּרְפוּ it was healed). The Elisha story appears as a prophetic legend whose significance simply manifests the prophet’s supernatural powers. In comparison with this, the Exodus 15 notice, with its addition in vv. 25–26, appears more as a didactical or ethical legend. According to A. Rofé’s study of the miracle stories in the literature about the prophet, the miracles of the didactical legends are performed through the deity’s intervention in response to prayer; and the miracle will “serve as a vehicle for the expression of other cherished beliefs and ideas,” the miracle will “become secondary and the homily primary.”¹³ There are elements of this also in Exod 15:22–26.

Exodus 15:25–26 is about God testing the people of their willingness to “listen to the Lord’s voice, to do what is right in his eyes, to listen to מִצְוֹתֵי his *mitzwot* and to keep כָּל־חֻקָּיו all his *chukkim*,” 15:25; there is a thematic connection between 15:25–26 and 16:4. In the latter, God tests the people, הֲיֵלֶךְ בְּתוֹרָתִי אִם־לֹא that is, whether they will “walk in my Torah or not” and in v. 28: “How long will you refuse to keep my *mitzwot* and my *torah* וְתוֹרָתִי?” The loose connection between v. 26 and the other part of the Mara episode indicates that v. 26 (and maybe v. 25) are later additions. In Exodus 15, the description of the waters at Mara as מְרִים “bitter” is related to its etiological function. But the Torah-didactical element that makes it an ethical legend is not very well integrated in the episode. An indication of this is that the word “to heal” in 2 Kgs 2:19–22 also appears in the didactical admonition in Exod 15:26, Yahweh is רֹפֵאָה “the one who heals you,” but not in the legend itself. A

12 For a study of these differences in the plague story, see my article K. Berge, “Didacticism in Exodus: Elements of Didactic Genre in Exodus 1–15,” *SJOT* 22 (2008): 3–28.

13 Alexander Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories: The Narratives about the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible. Their Literary Types and History* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1988), 126.

consequence of this is that the law admonition plays on wider connections of wholesome water. Another indication of a secondary addition is that the final admonition does not pick up the word *וַיִּרְהוּ* "he showed him," which could easily have triggered the word Torah in the list of commandments and stipulations. Together with 16:4, 28, Exod 15:25–26 belongs to a late redaction of the Pentateuch. Even when there are clear links to Deuteronomy, it is a matter of discussion whether this is Deuteronomistic or not. There are indications that the text shows knowledge of P. Accordingly, in dealing with these verses, one has to look at the whole combination of P and non-P texts, as it is the whole "symphony" that generates the ethnic, religious and moral elements of "Israelite identity."

The Israelites could not drink the water because it was "bitter." Moses cried to God, and Yahweh "showed him," *וַיִּרְהוּ* a tree or piece of wood; and he threw it into the water, *וַיַּשְׁלֵךְ אֶל-הַמַּיִם*. The word *ירה* appears in Exod 4:12, 15; and in 24:12, all cases probably part of the Pentateuch redaction.¹⁴ In chapter 4, Yahweh will instruct Moses what to say, and he shall talk to Aaron, who is set as his spokesman or interpreter, and Yahweh shall instruct them what to do. In 24:12, Moses will receive the tablets of stone, and the *torah* and the *mitzwah*, "which I have written to instruct them," *לְהוֹרִימָם*. In chapter 24, and probably in chapter 4 too, we meet Moses as the authority behind the Law and, in chapter 4, Aaron and the priests as his interpreters. In Exodus 15 however, it is not followed up by the word Torah.

The word *מתק* "to be/become sweet" is used only 6 times, basically in a wisdom-didactic context: Job 20:12; 21:33; 24:20; Prov 9:17 show how wrong tastes sweet in the mouth of the wicked, or it is used ironically in the description of the wicked. The notion of sweet water recurs in the Torah Psalms 19:10–11 and 119:103. Bitter water as a test is known from the trial of the unfaithful wife in Num 5; poisoned water is a part of the punishment from the Lord in Jer 9:15; 23:15; and notions of

14 At this point, we follow Eckart Otto, "Die nachpriesterschriftliche Pentateuchredaktion im Buch Exodus," in *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction, Reception, Interpretation* (ed. M. Vervenne; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 101 ff. and *Die Tora des Mose: die Geschichte der literarischen Vermittlung von Recht, Religion und Politik durch die Mosegestalt: vorgelegt in der Sitzung vom 19. Januar 2001* (Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften 19.2; Hamburg Göttingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001). The redaction history of Exod 3:1–4:17 (–31) is extremely complicated. There are indications of a "pre-redaction" layer in chapter 3, but a reliable reconstruction seems impossible. At least parts of 3:15ff. and chapter 4 seem dependent on P and probably belong to a comprehensive and late redactional layer.

bad or good water is used in Proverbs (Prov 9:17; 25:25). The idea of bitter and sweet also appears in accusations about Israel confusing good and evil, Isa 5:20. Eventually, good water is linked to the righteous in Ps 1.

Moses "made for them a statute and an ordinance." The singular forms are rare: Jos 24:25, somehow linked to "the book of God's Torah"; and Ezra 7:10, something to be taught in Israel, linked to studying and interpreting God's Torah; 1 Sam 30:25 refers to David's law activity. The plural forms occur in 14 cases in Deuteronomy (39 % of the occurrences). It is central in chapter 4, which is probably a late redaction, but it does not appear in the core of the book.¹⁵

So, it is clear that the conclusion or "moral" of the Mara episode is the Torah-didactical significance of bitter and sweet water. It plays on the concepts of bitter and sweet water, and on the notions of law and statutes in v. 25, but it is not very much integrated into the latter. The words, including *ṣāḥ* which is used by Job a number of cases to denote the well-defined cosmos, also refer to general experiential wisdom knowledge.

4. What is "didacticism"?

Now, it is one thing to identify didactical or ethical legends according to their form and structure. It is quite another thing to decide about their function, or rather, about the view of pedagogy or didacticism expressed through the legends.

15 It may look strange that "statute and ordinance" is made before the Sinai-arrival. Frank Crüsemann, *Die Tora: Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1992), 53ff., so also C. Houtman and Thomas B. Dozeman, "Der Pentateuch: Die Geschichte seiner Erforschung neben einer Auswertung," *The Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 301, think that it reduces the importance of the Sinai event in Exodus. I would offer an alternative interpretation. If the revelation at Horeb in Exod 3:1ff., at least in its present form, and 15:25f. both belong to the Pentateuchal redactor, we may see even a concentration on Sinai. Moses gets his commission at the mountain of the Law, meets his spokesman Aaron there. From there they go to their people and to Pharaoh and carry out their task. The *Pesah* is, from obvious reasons, linked to the exodus and not to Sinai. But the whole life of Moses, after his commission, reflects his position as a law-teacher centred on Sinai/Horeb. When this task is completed, he dies. Accordingly, when Israel disobeys, he teaches them the laws; when they collect food, he tells them to keep the Sabbath, although both the commandments and the Sabbath law were given at Sinai. Thus, 15:26 strengthens rather than diminishes the importance of Sinai: it covers the whole life of Moses from his commission through his "repetition" of the law in the plains of Moab. For a similar interpretation of Exod 3–4 see E. Otto.

Most scholars who have studied didactical texts in the Hebrew Bible tend to emphasize its authoritative aspect. Thus, H.-P. Müller states that didactic tales exhibit a simplistic monotony in the solutions of the conflicts; and the problems that the tale seeks to solve are brought tentatively in the foreground.¹⁶ Following this, C. Newsom writes about the pragmatic functions of didactic narratives, that they are deeply rhetorical, for they are instruments of persuasion, seeking to shape attitudes and behaviors:

[T]hey have a necessarily authoritarian relationship to meaning. Within the world of didactic narrative, truth is neither plural nor elusive nor contestable, but is unitary and unambiguous. The didactic tale is thus an intensely monologic genre, in which the author's supreme control of even contrary characters is instrumental to the story's ability to articulate its 'ready-made' truth.¹⁷

A number of works that identify some kind of *didacticism* in the Exodus story, or in the so-called *catechetical* passages in it, are informed by the same understanding of the terms.¹⁸ Most of these scholars link didacticism with teaching of Torah obedience.¹⁹ On the other hand, scholars

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- 16 H.-P. Müller, "Die weisheitliche Lehrerzählung im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt," in *Mensch, Umwelt, Eigenwelt. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Weisheit Israels* (ed. H.-P. Müller Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992).
 - 17 Carol A. Newsom, "The Book of Job as Polyphonic Text," *JSOT* 25 (2002): 97.
 - 18 This applies to the works of Sean McEvenue, "The Speaker(s) in Ex 1–15," in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel* (ed. Georg Braulik, Walter Groß, and Sean McEvenue; Freiburg: Herder, 1993); G. Fischer, "Exodus 1–15. Eine Erzählung," in *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (ed. M. Vervenne; BETL; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996); G. W. Coats, *Exodus 1–18, vol. IIA*, (FOTL; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999); Charles David Isbell, *The Function of Exodus Motifs in Biblical Narratives: Theological Didactic Drama*, vol. 52, (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity; Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002). William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 2, (AB; N.Y.: Doubleday, 1999). McEvenue, "The Speaker(s) in Ex 1–15." Propp and some other scholars regard the past as *paradigmatic*, which means that the past becomes instructive; the stories appear as examples. It is not clear how he will explicate this. Finally, Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1986), states that the Torah makes use of historical data for didactic purposes, that is, for the *inculcation* of spiritual values and moral and ethical imperatives. It is about involvement, concern, and responsibility, he states (in a comment to the Amalekites episode). As a whole, this is a very authoritarian understanding of didacticism.
 - 19 See Otto, "Die nachpriesterschriftliche Pentateuchredaktion im Buch Exodus," 110: Moses appears as a prophet in the Pt redaction, but his prophetic function "[besteht] darin, das Gesetz zu verkünden und vor Gesetzesungehorsam zu warnen." This has nothing to do with charismatic prophecy. As a prophet, Moses has to proclaim the Law and warn against disobedience to the Law. In this redaction, Deuteronomy is

who do not use the words “didacticism” or “catechesis” sometimes seem to apply more open and less authoritative concepts to the Exodus story.²⁰ This is the case in the study by H.-C. Schmitt, who links the final, post-P redaction of the Pentateuch to prophetic circles, in which the *Glaubensthematik* of Exod 4:31 and 14:31 plays a central part. In this redaction, obedience to the Law has been subsumed under a mode of existence which passively awaits the decisive divine salvation “im Vertrauen auf die göttliche Verheißung,” he says.²¹

In modern education research, the term “didactics” denotes a method for teaching. In most cases, its technical meaning is evident; the issue is supposed to be learned as it is taught. When used separately, it refers to a way of teaching which offers no room for resistance. In classical Greek terminology however, as in modern European thought, the term gets its fuller meaning when it is joined with its superior word “pedagogy.” This is what concerns me at this point in the essay. This word does not appear very much in literature about the Hebrew Bible, Michael V. Fox’s 1997 essay being an exception.²² This is about the “innate” learning ability of humans, according to the authors of Hebrew wisdom literature; but the study does not follow up with a pedagogical interpretation of the findings.

The terms “didactical” and “catechetical” mostly relate to education and upbringing of children. It is remarkable that most of the above-mentioned works do not refer to children’s upbringing, to which also

presented as Mosaic *Schriftauslegung* and Moses appears as the *Urbild* of a *schriftgelehrter Gesetzeslehrer*, see also *Die Tora des Mose*, 19. H.2.

- 20 Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1979). He states that the exodus story became “a *mythos* of the origins of Israelite religious consciousness and nationhood.” This was used as “a paradigmatic teaching for present and future generations.” Thus, *mythos* is here used more or less in the social anthropological way of a life teaching through which an ‘objective past’ recurrently gave way to a subjectivized event of the present.
- 21 Hans-Christoph Schmitt, “Redaktion des Pentateuch im Geiste der Prophetie. Beobachtungen zur Bedeutung der ‘Glaubens’-Thematik innerhalb der Theologie der Pentateuch,” *VT* 32 (1982): 170–89. There are a number of readings of the Exodus narrative for its moral value. Most of these works investigate the text’s “reservoir of meaning” by cutting it loose from its original historical moorings. I will leave these out of discussion for the present paper. Thus, Stanley Hauerwas asserts that moral principles are not sufficient in themselves for our moral existence. We are formed by stories and metaphors, not rules, Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975). The ethical power of stories lies primarily in their ability to touch our hearts, to provide us with affections and passion, and the coherence we need for our ethical vision.
- 22 Michael V. Fox, “Who can learn? A dispute in ancient pedagogy,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. M. L. Barre; Washington, D.C.: the Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997).

the term “pedagogy” normally refers. My discussion in what follows will attempt to see the “didactical” texts in Exodus from this perspective; more precisely, from modern pedagogy and its discussion of education and upbringing of children. This, of course, is something very different from what we could expect to find in thoughts about this area in biblical and ancient surrounding cultures, although modern, European thought profit considerably from “pedagogical” thinking in Antiquity. Do modern understandings of didacticism and pedagogy have any relevance in our reading of the biblical “didactical” texts?

Instead of discussing the relevant terms *per se*, let me start with a citation from an article by Ehud Ben Zvi:

[...] the most efficient way of shaping and controlling the production of social memory was through a process of socialization that inculcated [...] an accepted and shared way of thinking, of generating ideas, questions and ways of addressing them, of assigning significance to stories and imagining them [...].²³

This is a good description of how scholars regard the formation of social memory, mindshare and social identity. However, let me add a different perspective to this. In talking about ethnic or social identity, it is necessary to distinguish between what can be called the “intentions” and “forms” of cultural inculcation, in our setting the textual presentations, and the social mindshare or mindscape of the community which the ethnical elite tries to (re)shape. This is, one could say, the inculcation’s result.²⁴ It is clear that authors of some biblical texts represented a very authoritarian “didacticism.” This seems evident in Ps 78, where God is full of rage and anger against Israel because they did not הִאֵלֵינוּ had no faith in him, and לֹא־בָטְחוּ did not trust his salvation. The community that formed the biblical texts was a text-centered community.²⁵ However, in talking about the social identity or mindshare of the Judaic society, the Exodus narrative indicates that it addresses a broader community, which includes the illiterate public. This seems different from Deuteronomy. In regarding mindshare and mindscape as the result of an ongoing process of adaptation, one should be open to the possibility of resistance and re-formulations. It is clear that biblical scholars do not have access to this type of contemporary science. We can however, from a study of the texts and by application of theories about modes of identity-formation and reaction to elite conceptualiza-

23 Ben Zvi, “On Social Memory and Identity Formation in Late Persian Yehud,” 102.

24 For a definition of the terms, see *ibid.*, 99.

25 See, again, *ibid.*, 97.

tions of identity and ethnicity, as well as by studying the pragmatic function of myths, rituals, narratives, etc., get some idea about how the text possibly could result in a common mindshare.

The direction of this resembles issues dealt with by the term “agency.” Michel de Certeau starts his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, with the following sentence:

This essay is part of a continuing investigation of the ways in which users—commonly assumed to be passive and guided by established rules—operate.²⁶

It is this user operation that is my issue. Because I am focusing on the didactics of cultural mindshare, I will use a modern model of pedagogy.

In the Anglo-American tradition of learning, focus has been on the child or young person’s knowledge and socialization, i.e., “inculcation.” The European educational tradition however, ongoing through centuries, has focused on the existential element of human teaching and learning. This tradition implicitly and explicitly has paid attention to power, inequality and ethics in the teaching process (*Bildung*). In this tradition, pedagogical practice was influenced by questions and uncertainties that themselves enclose an emphasis on existential ways of being and acting.²⁷ The word *Bildung* refers to “the cultivation of the inner life or human soul of the child or the young person; and to the person’s inauguration to culture, tradition, and humanity.”²⁸

In this understanding of education, the adult is acutely aware of the asymmetric position of power in the pedagogical relation. The adults must see their own position at the same time as they see the position of the child. The educators serve as “midwives in children’s development” rather than one in which teachers instruct children in specific skills or competencies. It is a process in which children are helped to negotiate their personalities rather than being matched to predefined positions.

For this, i.e., the child or young person’s freedom of self-negotiating, one talks about the child’s *Bildsamkeit* as the precondition for educational action, and to the child’s *Selbsttätigkeit*, which refers to

26 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (trans. Steven Rendall; Paperback 1988 ed. Berkely: University of California Press, 1984).

27 T. Sævi, “Lived relationality as fulcrum for pedagogical-ethical practice,” *Studies of Philosophy and Education* 30 (2011): 459. Now republished in G. Biesta, ed., *Making Sense of Education: Fifteen Contemporary Educational Theorists in their own Words* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012).

28 Ibid., 460.

the child's own ability to create sense and meaning out of what it is being taught; it represents the ability of the child to re-create, negotiate, resist and also reject what he or she is taught by representatives for the actual culture.²⁹ It has been translated into English as subjectification.³⁰ For the child to be a free human being, along with the educator, there has to be the possibility of personal rational resistance and rejection from the young person in the education process.

This does not remove the issue of authority in the pedagogical situation. It is a precondition for all pedagogy. However, it has to be combined with trust. In this educational model, the possibility of resistance presupposes that the child trusts an authority (the educator). Trust thus constitutes the authority of the educator. Selbsttätigkeit is a constructive resistance, a felt and experienced possibility based on the fact that trust in an educator is given by the child.

This leads me to the meaning of נאמ. It is a central term in the Exodus story: It appears in 4:1–9, 31; and 14:31. The HALOT dictionary translates it “to prove to be firm, reliable, faithful, trustworthy,” or “to be permanent, endure, or to believe in, to regard something as trustworthy, to have trust in, to be convinced.” Interestingly, the dictionary also has another entry of the word, with the meanings “attendant (of children), guardian, nurse, looked after, supported,” and the Greek equivalent is τιθηνός, “one who takes care, foster-parent, nursing father, nurse.” The most relevant passage is Num 11:12:

Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, “Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child,” to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors?

It is tempting to connect the two homonyms, or rather the two meanings of the same word, by putting them into the idea of pedagogy described above. Pedagogical trust is the precondition for the acceptance of the authority of the adult (the teacher, educator); and it is on this background that one is given the possibility to resist. Trust, in this connection, is the conviction that the other wants to give me the best. Trust is based on overflow and surplus: one creates trust by surpassing what is expected.

29 A central European pedagogian who has advocated this understanding of pedagogy is Klaus Mollenhauer, *Vergessene Zusammenhänge: über Kultur und Erziehung* (München: Juventa Verlag, 1983). (English translation in preparation.) My presentation here reflects my reading of this book.

30 Most notably by the Dutch pedagogian G. J. J. Biesta, *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy* (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, 2010).

This is what I will develop. The law is the authority in the implicit pedagogy of Exodus, but it presupposes trust in the teaching authority (which is Moses or God), which again implies that this authority has proved himself to be reliable, which finally includes the people's sense or feeling to have the possibility of constructive resistance. If this interpretation proves to be viable, one should expect to find in the Exodus story just this overflow or surplus, which generates trust by reading it.

Of course, in European pedagogy, this is presented as an ethical commitment for contemporary educators. However, it is also maintained that this view of learning reflects deep existential concerns in humanity. Therefore, I also think it can be used as a heuristic tool, or at least as a possibility, in our thinking of memory and identity-formation in the ancient societies; if not as an element in the didactic thoughts of those who produced the biblical stories (before Descartes, it would be anachronistic to think of this pedagogical philosophy as something intended by the authors), so at least as a possibility in the apprehension of it by the audience or the "users." Accordingly, it merits further investigation of "didacticism" in context, to see if the Exodus story indicates a broader pedagogical functionality.

5. Teaching and testing—the prison-house of didacticism?

Exodus 15:25: וַיִּשְׁפָּט יְהוָה וַיִּנְסֵהוּ וַיִּשְׁפָּט יְהוָה וַיִּנְסֵהוּ "And there he put them to test." That is the traditional and ubiquitous translation. Now: what if this word נסה is not to be translated by "test" but "to give experience, train" (cf. נסה Pi, meaning 2 in HALOT)? By "test" we normally think of measuring someone according to a pre-defined norm or standard. The idea behind the "test" translation is that the people are tested against the norms of וַיִּשְׁפָּט יְהוָה. But one could just as well argue for the opposite: Just the idea of וַיִּשְׁפָּט יְהוָה could indicate that God wanted the people to try them out, to see how they worked, and to interpret them in light of their basic life experiences. So, given that there is a pre-defined norm, God wants to give the people experience, training them to see how the practice and application of the norm works.

Accordingly, I will suggest that one apply the meaning of the word as it appears in for instance 1 Sam 17:39: David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he had no experience of them, לֹא-נָסָה; and Judg 3:1: Now these are the nations that the LORD left אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּם אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנִסּוֹת to give Israel experience by them, all those in Israel who did not know (had no experience) of any war in Canaan (אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּ אֶת כָּל-מִלְחָמוֹת בְּנֵנוּ), so that the generations of Israel

should know לִמְדוּ מִלְחָמָה to learn war לְמַעַן יָדַעַתּוּ. To be sure, there is some kind of norm or better a standard behind this; something they have to live up to in war-time and battle; but the point is to give them experience of something they did not know yet. It was an experience they would get through the presence of the Canaanites in the country. Note this combination of נָסָה and teach, which accordingly means “to give them experience of something that they do not know yet.”

At the moment I do not have models to postulate about how the members of the society interpreted the notion of חֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט and even the succeeding terms for laws. But for sure they interpreted them in the light of the deep existential, life-threatening (and life-saving) image of bad and wholesome water, and probably even in the light of the mythical chaos which threatened to destroy the life-giving surroundings of the individuals in that society as described at the beginning of this paper. If one thinks that the proverbial and wisdom imagery of polluted and good water (Prov 5:15; 9:17; 18:4; 20:5; 25:25) reflect common mind-share, and if the wisdom use of the terms as reflected in Job 14:5; 26:10; 28:26; 38:10 and Prov 8:29 represent a similar common idea, one should postulate that the morality expressed in the Exodus story is adapted to “the practice of everyday life” (Certeau).

In his book about cultural memory, Jan Assmann asserts that all cultures develop their connective structures as a symbolic *Sinnwelt* based on common experiences, expectations, and rooms of action.³¹ By this, trust and orientation are created through the so-called “figures of memory.” The idea of *Erinnerungsfiguren* is that they appear as images. This is a precondition for memory.³² According to Assmann, the development of traditions from orality to literacy affects the culture’s connective structure by moving it from ritual to textual coherence, from *Nachahmung und Bewahrung* to *Auslegung und Erinnerung* (i.e., hermeneutics). However, it needs to be said that even in oral cultures, “interpretation” does take place. The “*Sinnwelt*” of the textual image refers to another site of memory, in which the common experiences of the community addressed.

This suggests a much more open situation of learning from the Exodus 15 text. Let me turn to the so-called catechetical passages in Exod 10:2: They shall סָפְרוּ “report / tell your children and grandchildren how I have made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them—so that you may know that I am the LORD.” The didactic impli-

31 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (2d ed.; München: Beck, 1997; repr., 1999), 17.

32 Ibid., 37.

cation—"that you may know that I am the Lord"—comes as a direct consequence of the telling of the narrative, not from any legalistic explication. One gets the impression that this refers to trust in God, that he has capacity and is willing to take care of the people. This is the same in 12:24: They shall observe and keep the Pesach observance, and this practice is the reason for the children's possible question: "What do you mean by this observance?" And the answer is just the same reference to narrative: "You shall say: 'It is the Pesach sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" The Pesach ritual is a transition ritual for "the Exodus generation," but the idea of the ritual is protection. By keeping the distinction between Israel and the Egyptians, i.e., by staying inside, they are saved from the horror that hits the latter. This does not seem to change in the didactic passage about the Massot, 13:8–9. It is unclear what *למען תהיה תורת יהוה בפיהך* means. The redactors of this late text express that there are lessons to be learned from the narrative about Torah piety, but they abide by the narrative and the "praxis"-related form of this teaching; the teaching is within the sphere of *Nachahmung und Bewahrung* (J. Assmann's terms). This is repeated in the succeeding passage about the firstborn, vv. 11–16. The verb *קשה* "to make hard" might indicate that there is a Torah-didactical interpretation in the passage, as we see in Deut 10:16 and 2 Kgs 17:14; Jer 17:23 and others, but the non-formulaic expression in Exodus 13 counters with this, seemingly more in line with the "non-biased" Deut 2:30.

6. Concluding interpretation of water in Exod 1–15

So, what about water in the Exodus story? How do we interpret it? Aleida Assmann starts one of her articles by referring to G. Simmel's definition of culture as the dialectics of fluidity and solidity; German *Flüssig und Fest*.³³ The point is that culture is like water, or rather like a river, it is *die strömende Lebendigkeit*, which, however, needs to be restricted or limited by *die festen Produkte*. This she calls *Paradoxie der Kultur*:

Im jedem Falle bedeutet Verfestigung Zurichtung eines plastischen Materials durch Reduktion, Selektion, Abstraktion, Definition. Aber, und das ist

33 A. Assmann and D. Harth, eds., *Kultur als Lebenswelt und Monument* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991), 11–13, 181ff.

entscheidend, es gibt grundsätzlich keine Verfestigung, die nicht wiederum zur Verflüssigung herausfordern könnte.³⁴

By fluidity Assmann means the *Lebenswelt* of Phenomenology. It refers to the “Ensemble unverfügbarer Gegebenheiten und Voraussetzungen sozialen Lebens und Handelns,” it is the *Alltag* or *Nahhorizont*, before it is objectified and treated as a theme; it is something that is implicit and evident in our experiences.

The notion of water in Exodus 1–15 opens some kind of intuitive interpretation. The cosmic myth of the sea monster and the Pesach ritual as sites of memory, and storytelling as the communicative basis for the community’s mindshare, allow the addressed community to (re)interpret the text’s significance for their cultural and moral identity in the light of this “Ensemble” of pre-objectified and pre-thematized *Alltags*-experiences. In 15:22–26, this fluidity is met by the stability and solidity of the mitzwot of the (probably written) Torah. This is the paradox that Assmann talks about. The final interpretation of water cannot stand alone; it is always to be read together with the experienced liturgical or ritual memory of the story itself.

The Exodus story presents Israel in Egypt as an ethnic group that once lived under the conditions of slaves. As such, they were socially invisible. In the Exodus story (1–15), water is the major symbol by which “Israel” as an ethnic entity becomes socially visible. It plays a major role in Israel’s innocent suffering, which one may compare to the notion of “blood-sacrifice” in the formation of ethnic identity (see above), but Moses the national icon is saved through it like Noah in the Flood. In Exodus 14 it is the medium for the final separation; although the point is that they are saved *through* it. Separation, or what we could call “Bordering,” is combined with “Othering” in the blood and frogs episodes, which symbolize impurity, especially in the Priestly texts. This corresponds to the notion of the Israelite sacrifice which is an abomination, a תועבת מצרים (Exod 8:22), which again corresponds to the preceding separation in Egypt between the Egyptians and the Israelites during the rest of the plagues. Finally, when Israel is saved, water changes its significance, becoming a symbol of internal decisions of Israelite morality in 15:22–26.

The abhorrent element of water, and of sacrifice, resembles the notion of the impure peoples driven out of Egypt in the Manetho text.³⁵

34 A. Assmann, “Fest und flüssig: Anmerkungen zu einer Denkfigur,” in *Kultur als Lebenswelt und Monument*, 181–99; citation from p. 182.

Thus, the idea of the expulsion of the impure peoples and thus separation was a common element in the cultural mindshare at the time of the completion of the Hebrew bible.

This concept of “Othering” is enhanced by its mythical element. The notion of a sea monster is visible at least in the Priestly source of the Exodus-story. Even Aaron’s staff, which is used in the competition with the Egyptian magicians, and which turns the water of Egypt into blood, is a sea monster, תנין, Exod 7:9; which swallows the other snakes. As noted above, Egypt or Pharaoh is denoted as *tannin* in Ezek 29:3 and 32:2.³⁶ In 14:16 (P), Moses splits (בקע) the sea. Wakeman has argued that this belongs to the imagery of the sea monster.³⁷ According to common exegesis (see also Day), the symbol of the oppressive tyrant who had to be split open that Israel might be born.

So, out of the splitting of the Sea, Israel is given social visibility. As a result, water used for Israelite genocide (Exodus 1–2) by Pharaoh, and water as the center of chaos, death, and impurity, is now changed into a symbol of divine power and cosmic and divine law, which is the basis for Israelite morality. This sets the limit for the monster. Thus, the new life of Israel is one of an ordered universe, which also includes the morality.

The notion of water is a part of a wider set of liminal symbolism in the exodus story. As such, we have to do with a story of initiation, or rather, to use a term from Bourdieu, a narrative of *institution*, or rather of *installation or inauguration*. This is a story of legitimation and identity-formation. According to Bourdieu, as a rite of passage, this is to accord somebody with social prerogatives of rights and duties. Through such rites, and probably also through the relevant stories and myths, one changes the persons’ or group’s reality through the change of their vision of their reality; this also includes a change of conduct.

Now, it is Bourdieu’s contention that the strategy to make the persons or group stay within their new status or identity is to imprint this status on the body in the form of *habitus*.³⁸ All groups, he states, will

35 Russell E. Gmirkin, *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (LHBOTS 433; London: T & T Clark, 2006), 192ff. *God’s Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery*

36 See also Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, 88–89.

37 *God’s Battle with the Monster*, p. 126.

38 L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, “Den Ruf der Weisheit hören. Das Konzept des Lernens im Buch der Sprichwörter,” in *Religiöses Lernen in der biblischen, frühjüdischen und frühchristlichen Überlieferung* (ed. B. Ego and H. Merkel; WUNT 180; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 78, regards (wisdom-defined) learning as internalization, Habi-

engrave on its members' body, treated as a site of memory, the most beloved or favored things of one's culture.³⁹ We cannot say that water is a part of the bodily rites in the biblical story, but still, the ability to discern between bad and wholesome water is one of the most necessary condition of life and something that affects our body all time. So, it is relevant to look at water and the connotations linked to this as something that may affect the *habitus* of the Exodus group.

As a conclusion, I will add two brief remarks. The first is on the notion of trust and didacticism. Pedagogical trust, as I said, is based on overflow and surplus: one creates trust by surpassing what is expected. In the third objection about the people's trust in Exod 4:1–9, it is about water turned into blood:

If they will not believe even these two signs or heed you, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground (Exod 4:9, NRSV).

The sign turns out to be excessive, in particular in the P text (7:19–22). The problem is that the magicians do the same; so the competition has to go on. The next scene has frogs in the river and all over the land, but again the magicians did the same. After this, the competition stops. The magicians cannot do the same any more, and in the sixth plague, about the boils, they simply were afflicted by them. The final reference to trust is after the parting of the sea, 14:31. Even here there is an element of excess; none of the Egyptians survived, and the Lord saved the Israelites.

Then to my second brief remark: It is reasonable to think that purifying water was a social mindshare in the Yehud community. I will suggest that it is possible to regard the Exodus story as a tragedy, about the rise and fall of Pharaoh. The chorus, which sums up the story and at least in some cases relates the fate of the character to an existing norm, has a resemblance in Exod 15:21:⁴⁰

Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with

tus, and assimilation. However, he does not reflect on the character of these processes by the learning persons.

39 P. Bourdieu, "Les rites comme actes d'institution," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 43 (1982): 58–63. Here referred to through the Norw. translation, in idem, *Symbolsk makt*. See also P. Bourdieu "Épreuve scolaire et consecration sociale," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 39 (1981): 3–70.

40 At this point, see for example, the concluding remarks of the chorus in Euripides' *Medea*: "Zeus on Olympus, dispenses many things. Gods often contradict our fondest expectations. What we anticipate does not come to pass. What we don't expect some god finds a way to make it happen. So with this story."

dancing. And Miriam answered them, "Sing to Yahweh, for he is highly exalted! Horse and his rider he threw into the sea."

We do not know the exact meaning of the Aristotelian *Catharsis*. Let me just refer to F. Nietzsche's interpretation of the Dionysian chorus.⁴¹ The spectators of the Greek tragedies re-experienced their own identity, feelings and longings in the tragedy: The chorus is the living wall against the pressure of reality. Following his interpretation, the cited song shows those who are removed from the past, reality's proper condition and foundation: God watches the justice of the world. But it is a rather open-ended "moral" or conclusion. The "Torah didacticism" evoked by the final Exodus text suggests a rather open and flexible interpretation. It invites the audience to find their own life experiences, but it does not impose a specific moral interpretation of it.

Modern European pedagogy as referred to above could hardly have developed before Descartes; but its roots can be traced back into Antiquity. Although the motif of water in Exod 15:22–26 is part of Pentateuchal "Torah didacticism," the present investigation shows that there are perspectives in its textual presentation that correspond to the view of European pedagogy as presented above.

41 English translation Friedrich Nietzsche and Douglas Smith, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

The Song of the Sea and Isaiah: Exodus 15 in Post-monarchic Prophetic Discourse¹

IAN DOUGLAS WILSON

Yahweh's victory over Pharaoh at the Reed Sea (ים סוף), Israel's crossing of the Sea, and Yahweh's bringing the people through the wilderness and into the promised land were, without a doubt, monumental memory sites in the socio-mental landscape of ancient Judah. Throughout the texts that eventually became the Hebrew Bible, memories of the exodus—its wonders and its catastrophes—resound (e.g., Josh 24:5–10; Ps 106; Neh 9:9–21; just to cite a few). It was an overarching (perhaps *the* overarching) framework within which Judean social memory operated.² The exodus from Egypt is the defining moment in Israel's coming

1 After presenting a draft of this essay at the “Thinking of Water” workshop at the University of Alberta in May 2012, I also presented it at the 2012 Canadian Society of Biblical Studies Annual Meeting in Waterloo, Ontario. Many thanks to all who offered comments and critiques at both conferences.

2 Thinking in terms of metanarrative, one of course finds clear interconnections between the exodus and the other major framing event in Judean socio-mnemonic discourse, the exile: the people are cleansed in the wilderness and led back to their homeland, where Yahweh (re)plants the people and (re)establishes his presence in his holy abode. With regard to the literature's historical development, the Babylonian conquest of Judah, destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, and subsequent deportations were probably the most influential agents in forming this metanarrative in Judah's textual corpus. For helpful diachronic discussions of biblical literature, see David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), trans. of *Literaturgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008). However, in the presentation of Israel's/Judah's story within the Judean corpus of literature, the exodus comes first, and so it *had* to function as the primary framing event in Judean socio-mnemonic discourse. Judean scribes may have imagined the exodus in ways that recalled the exile, but the exodus was (and had to be) primary in their narrativ memories. Hence one may speak of the return from exile as a “second exodus” but not the exodus as a “second return from exile.” For more on the exile in biblical literature, see, e.g., Robert P. Carroll, “Exile, Restoration, and Colony: Judah in the Persian Empire,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible* (ed. L. G. Perdue; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 102–16; Adele Berlin, “The Exile: Biblical Ideology and Its Postmodern Ideological Interpretation,” in *Literary Constructions of Identity in the Ancient World* (ed. H. Liss and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns,

of age story, and its key human character, Moses, is Israel's lawgiver and preeminent prophet (cf. Deut 34). Not surprisingly, allusions to the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1–21), which commemorates the divine victory over Pharaoh (vv. 1–12, 18, 21) and remembers things to come (vv. 13–17), crop up repeatedly in Judean historiographical discourse—i.e., written discourse concerning Judah's past, present, and future—especially in prophetic books and in Psalms (e.g., Isa 11:15–12:2; Pss 77:12–21).³

In this essay, I explore the Song's role in socio-cultural discourse and memory formation⁴ amongst literati in the late Persian/early Hel-

2010), 341–56; and the essays in Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin, eds., *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010).

- 3 N.B. I use the phrase “historiographical discourse” in a functional sense, not formal. In other words, Psalm 77, for example, is “historiographical” because it tells us something about how Judeans thought about their past via written discourse. In this case, readers of Psalm 77 would reflect on their present dire situation by remembering Yahweh's past miraculous deeds, specifically how the deity safely brought Israel through the Sea, the mighty waters. To be sure, one still has to deal with generic differences between a poetical text like Psalm 77 and an historiographical narrative like 1–2 Samuel, for instance, but either type of text can function historiographically within socio-cultural discourse.
- 4 I acknowledge that “memory” is a slippery signifier in the present-day academy. Cf. Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *The American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 1386–1403 (1388); see also the critique of Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse,” *Representations* 69 (2000): 127–50. First of all, memory is a cognitive function of the individual human brain. See, e.g., Pascal Boyer, “What Are Memories For? Functions of Recall in Cognition and Culture,” in *Memory in Mind and Culture* (ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3–32; also Francis Landy, “Notes Towards a Poetics of Memory in Ancient Israel,” in *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 331–45. As I understand it, social memory is a systemic and symbolic *process* by which a community collectively experiences its present and imagines its future in terms of its past. (Of course, individual memory is systemic and symbolic as well.) Within a given social context, this process is intertwined with the construction of social identity, with the emplotment of the community's shared narratives. See, e.g., James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 87–91 and *passim*; and the essays in Louis Jonker, ed., *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (FAT 2/53; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). Among other works that have influenced my thinking on social memory are Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), esp. 3–30, and *passim* (Geertz does not speak to memory *per se*, but his work is foundational for understanding systemic socio-cultural symbols); Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History,” *Representations* 26 (1989): 7–24; Barry Schwartz, “Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II,” *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996): 908–27; *idem*, “Frame Images: Towards a Semiotics of Collective Memory,”

lenistic period in Judah, roughly the fourth century BCE, a crucial period for the formation of Judean “books” that eventually made their way into the Hebrew Bible.⁵ I hope to work towards a better understanding of how the Song and its tropes functioned in their literary and socio-cultural milieu(x) at this time. The genesis of social memory, that which bridges the gap between individual and collective mnemonic processes, is a shared or public “site of memory” (*lieu de mémoire*)—viz., anything that carries a “symbolic aura,” whether material or non-material in nature, which is widely circulated or experienced within a given community.⁶ One must consider social memory, then, within the “sym-

Semiotica 121 (1998): 1–40; Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

- 5 Historically, I refer to the fourth century, viz., to the close of the Persian period and overlapping advent of Hellenism, because at this time many of the books we know from the Hebrew Bible became extant in their *essentially* final forms amongst the literati of Judah. For discussion of the evidence, see Lester L. Grabbe, “Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period,” in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 317; ESHM 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 129–55. See also Carr, *Formation*, 221–24, who argues that the pentateuchal books and “prophetic” books (i.e., Joshua–2 Kings as well as Isaiah–Malachi) emerged as authoritative collections amongst literati in the Persian period, with the pentateuchal books (i.e., the emergent “Torah”) being the primary authoritative collection. Cf. Thomas Römer, “How Many Books (*teuchs*): Pentateuch, Hexateuch, Deuteronomistic History, or Enneateuch?” in *Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch? Identifying Literary Works in Genesis through Kings* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman, Thomas Römer, and Konrad Schmid; SBLAIL 8; Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 25–42 (esp. 37–39). Hence, taking into account important text-critical issues (e.g., Jeremiah), one may use these books as sources for the discourses of the fourth-century milieu. Cf. Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (ed. Walter G. Aufrecht, Neil A. Mirau, and Steven W. Gauley; JSOTSup 244; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 194–209; idem, “What is New in Yehud? Some Considerations,” in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; STAR 5; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 32–48; and see Jon L. Berquist’s recent comments on deuteronomistic literature, “Historiographic Questions for the Deuteronomistic History in the Persian Period,” in *Historiography and Identity (Re)Formulation in Second Temple Historiographical Literature* (ed. Louis Jonker; LHBOTS 534; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 3–13. Of course, Judean scribes probably restructured and/or expanded some of these texts in the third century (see Carr, *Formation*, 180–203; cf. Schmid, *Old Testament*, 183–209), but, for the most part, the pentateuchal, historical, and prophetic books are scribal products of the fourth-century milieu, i.e., the late Persian/early Hellenistic period. On the archaeology and history of Judah in the fourth century, see, e.g., the essays in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century BCE* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007); also Alexander Fantalkin and Oren Tal, “The Canonization of the Pentateuch: When and Why? (Part I),” *ZAW* 124 (2012): 1–18.
- 6 Cf. Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 13–14.

bolic universe available to the society,"⁷ within the socio-cultural matrix that informs and guides group identity and experience. For the literate community in fourth-century Jerusalem working in and around the temple, written texts were an integral part of this symbolic matrix, just as important as physical space and public ritual, for example, and other social memory sites. Thus, the interconnections between textual memory sites, the discursive "webs of significance"⁸ created within the textual universe, open a gateway into the mnemonic world of the texts' fourth-century literate tradents.⁹

That said, because references to the exodus, to the Sea crossing, and employment of the exodus motif are pervasive in the Hebrew Bible's books, I have limited my study to two major questions: (1) How did the Song's narrative, its story of Yahweh's victory at the Sea and how he guides his people to a holy place, function discursively in fourth-century Judah? And (2) how does discourse in the prophetic book of Isaiah pick up and employ elements of the Song? In other words, how did the Song's narrative work as a major site of memory in ancient Judah, and how does this narrative site operate within Isaianic prophetic discourse? I hope to show that the Song, within its narrative setting in the book of Exodus, has an inherent interest in geographical, temporal, and redemptive liminality. This interest in liminality is evident in passages of Isaianic discourse that explicitly and implicitly refer to the Song and its tropes.¹⁰

7 Confino, "Collective Memory," 1391.

8 Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 5. Cf. *ibid.*, 89 and *passim*.

9 Cf. Jan Assmann's comments on discourse and textuality in *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 15–17, though, unlike Assmann, I am not concerned in this essay with the diachronic development of discourse over time, the "mnemohistory" of discourse. See also Renate Lachmann, "Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature," in *Cultural Memory Studies* (ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning; Media and Cultural Memory 8; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 301–10.

10 For a quite different look at the relationship between Exodus 15 and Isaiah, see George Wesley Buchanan, "Isaianic Midrash and the Exodus," in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; JSNTSup 154; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 89–109.

1. Yahweh, Israel, and the Sea

Much has been said about the Song of the Sea.¹¹ Throughout the previous century, scholarship on the Song has revolved around questions of date, of literary and tradition history, as well as issues related to the Song's poetical and linguistic features. Some argue that the Song, with its West Semitic mythical patterns and apparently archaic poetical grammar, is a product of great antiquity, perhaps even from pre-monarchic days.¹² Others argue the opposite, that it is a late, post-monarchic composition.¹³ And of course there are those who find a middle ground.¹⁴ Some scholars, taking a different route, have focused primarily on the Song's placement in the book of Exodus and its rela-

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- 11 In addition to the standard commentaries on Exodus, see the monographs of Martin L. Brenner, *The Song of the Sea: Ex 15:1–21* (BZAW 195; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991); and Brian D. Russell, *The Song of the Sea: The Date of Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1–21* (Studies in Biblical Literature 101; New York: Peter Lang, 2007); which contain discussions of previous scholarship.
 - 12 E.g., Mark Leuchter, "Eisodus as Exodus: The Song of the Sea (Exod 15) Reconsidered," *Bib* 92 (2011): 321–46, who relies on the influential work of Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 112–44. Cf. also the work of Cross and his colleague David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997 [originally a Johns Hopkins doctoral dissertation submitted in 1950]), 31–45; also Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 132–46, 179–227, and passim. For discussion and critique of Albrightean ideas of early Hebrew poetry, see Yigal Bloch, "The Prefixed Perfective and the Dating of Early Hebrew Poetry—A Re-Evaluation," *VT* 59 (2009): 34–70. On the related issue of verbal aspect in the Song, see Robert Shreckhise, "The Problem of Finite Verb Translation in Exodus 15:1–18," *JOT* 32 (2008): 287–310.
 - 13 E.g., Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 19, 175–77; Schmid, *Old Testament*, 82–83; cf. idem, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (trans. James D. Nogalski; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 221–24, trans. of *Erzöster und Exodus: Untersuchungen zur doppelten Begründung der Ursprünge Israels innerhalb der Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments* (WMANT 81; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999). Schmid places the foundations of the exodus story in the Neo-Assyrian period, but he argues that the Song is a late addition to this story because, in his reading, Exodus 15 presupposes elements of the priestly document, Second Isaiah, and the Psalter. However, in line with Martin Noth (*Exodus: A Commentary* [trans. J. S. Bowden; OTL; London: SCM, 1962], 120–26), Schmid holds on to the possibility that v. 21b, Miriam's refrain, "represents more ancient traditional material on which the composition of Exodus 15 was based" (*Old Testament*, 83).
 - 14 E.g., Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Song of the Sea and Salvation History," in *On the Way to Nineveh: Studies in Honor of George M. Landes* (ed. Stephen L. Cook and S. C. Winter; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 94–113, who submits that vv. 1–12 and 18 constitute a monarchic-era victory hymn, and that deuteronomistic scribes refashioned the hymn by adding vv. 13–17, probably in the post-monarchic period.

tionship with what precedes and follows in the larger narrative context—thus setting aside extended discussions of date, tradition history, etc., or presuming particular, established positions on these issues.¹⁵ My interests in this essay are closely aligned with the latter approach; regarding the text's history, I am sympathetic to those who argue for an early date for its origin,¹⁶ but my main concern is with the socio-mnemonic role of the text in the fourth century BCE and later, the time when Judean scribes in Jerusalem began to codify their literature into substantial collections of texts that eventually became what we know as the Hebrew Bible. With the advent and essential finalization of the pentateuchal books, deuteronomistic literature, prophetic books, Chronicles, etc. in temple-centered Jerusalem, there existed an extensive historiographical discourse that Judean scribes read and consulted time and again, impacting and shaping the literate community's social memory. As already stated, the exodus event and its celebratory exultation in Exodus 15 were central loci in this mnemonic landscape in late Persian/early Hellenistic-period Judah.

So what exactly does the Song say? What kind of story does it tell within this context? The text begins with the Song's *raison d'être*. It is a song with a particularly historical consciousness; it is grounded within and evocative of the monumental story that surrounds it. The opening word in Exod 15:1 (יָאֵל "Then ...") links the text with the dramatic narrative that precedes in ch. 14. The Song formally begins with a proclamation that recalls and highlights the events previously narrated, embedding the Song within this particular mnemonic milieu, inviting its

15 E.g., James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (JSOTSup 139; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 41–62; Georg Fischer, "Das Schilfmeerlied Exodus 15 in seinem Kontext," *Bib* 77 (1996): 32–47; David Noel Freedman, "Moses and Miriam: The Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1–18, 21)," in *Realia Dei: Essays in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Edward F. Campbell* (ed. Prescott H. Williams Jr. and Theodore Hiebert; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 67–83; Mark S. Smith, "The Poetics of Exodus 15 and Its Position in the Book," in *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F.S.C.* (ed. Lawrence Boadt and Mark S. Smith; CBQMS 32; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 2001), 23–34.

16 I am inclined to agree with many of Cross's observations regarding the antiquity of the Song (see *Canaanite Myth*, esp. 121–25). I disagree, though, with Cross's notion of objective prosodic analysis (see *Canaanite Myth*, 121); and Bloch, "Prefixed Perfective," 66–67, shows that the so-called *yagtl* forms are extant outside Cross and Freedman's corpus of ancient poetry (*pace* Cross and Freedman, *Studies*, 20; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 125). Evidence in Exodus 15 nonetheless suggests that at least vv. 1–12, 18, 21 could stem from a monarchic-era composition (cf. Dozeman, "Song of the Sea," 94–113).

readers/singers to imagine themselves praising Yahweh on the shore of the Sea:

אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת ליהוה ויאמרו לאמר
אשירה ליהוה כי גאה גאה סוס ורכבו רמה בים

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to Yahweh, and they said:
“I will sing to Yahweh, for he is highly exalted; horse and its rider he has
cast into the Sea.”

The next eleven verses then remember this fantastic victory over Pharaoh and his chariots, moving from introductory praise and identification of the divine (vv. 2–3) to more specific recollections of the divine action and might (vv. 4–12). In v. 13 the focus shifts to the ongoing journey of the deity’s newly redeemed people (עַם־יְיָ גְּאֻלָּתוֹ), how he leads them past the terrified inhabitants of Canaan (vv. 13–16a), bringing them to and planting them in the holy dwelling that he has prepared (vv. 16b–17).¹⁷ The Song, minus the brief refrain in v. 21, concludes in v. 18 with a proclamation of Yahweh’s eternal reign.

In its praise and memorialization of the divine, the Song employs and reinforces a number of common tropes: for example, Yahweh as warrior (v. 3; cf. Deut 20:4; 1 Sam 17:47; etc.); the powerful hand/arm of the deity (יָד/זְרוֹעַ/יָמִין) (vv. 6, 12, 16, 17; cf. Isa 62:8; Pss 98:1; 118:15–16; etc.);¹⁸ the enemy paralyzed with fear (vv. 14–16a; cf. Josh 2:9; 5:1; etc.); Yahweh as chief deity (v. 11; cf. Deut 32:8 [LXX]; Pss 29:1; 89:6–8; etc.); and Yahweh as king (v. 18; cf. Judg 8:23; 1 Sam 8:7; Pss 29:10; 93:1; etc.), to cite a few of the more prominent themes in the text.¹⁹ The employment of these tropes is reminiscent of celebratory hymns, e.g., Pss 96–99, which extol the might and kingship of Yahweh, and which celebrate the deity’s devotion to his chosen people.²⁰ However, unlike the hymnic psalms, the Song of the Sea is set within the exodus story itself, the moment of divine redemption for Israel. It is embedded within its own narrational memory. It is the celebratory act that immediately follows Yahweh’s miraculous deliverance of the people at the Sea, and thus it is

17 There is general scholarly consensus regarding the division between vv. 1–12 and 13–18; cf. Smith, “Poetics of Exodus 15,” 26–27, and literature cited there.

18 In Exod 14 there is a pronounced emphasis upon Moses’ hand/arm (יָד) (cf. 14:16, 21, 26, 27), but the Song mentions only Yahweh’s hand/arm (יָד/זְרוֹעַ/יָמִין). In fact, although Moses helps initiate the Song in v. 1, he is present nowhere in the Song itself.

19 See Russell, *Song of the Sea*, passim, for extensive discussions of the various tropes in the Song.

20 Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 249–53.

the first hymn in the presentation of Israel's story.²¹ The Song, therefore, within Judean memory, functions as the prototypical moment of communal awe and wonder to which all subsequent hymns of Yahweh's divine, redemptive power symbolically refer, whether consciously or unconsciously. One can say the same regarding the Song's relationship with laments like Ps 77, which contrast a present moment of grief or distress with the past moment of divine and national glory at the Sea.²² From a socio-mnemonic perspective, the Song stands as a conspicuous landmark of Judah's salvific relationship with Yahweh. It memorializes the exodus as the primary redemptive event in Israel's past, but it is also an integral part of that past moment, an event in and of itself, which occurs just after the Sea-crossing.

Thus, in considering the Song as a site of memory in fourth-century Judah, one cannot separate it from its narrative context. It is undeniably connected to the story that precedes it.²³ Likewise, it is connected to the stories that follow it. This is especially evident in the details of vv. 13–17, which go beyond what the reader/singer experientially knows at this point in the redemptive story. These verses allude to the arrival of the people in the promised land, to a holy place, a sacred mountain established and possessed by Yahweh, clearly hinting at things to come in the Israelites' journey.

It is here, in the latter part of the Song, that the problematic issue of Hebrew verbal aspect arises. Throughout the Song, there is a curious blend of finite verbal forms. Upon first reading, one finds nothing particularly odd in vv. 1–4: the *yiqtol* forms seem to indicate incomplete, continuous, or future action, while the *qatal* forms indicate completed or past action. For example, v. 1b reads, "Let me/I will sing [*yiqtol* cohortative] to Yahweh, for he is highly exalted [*qatal* stative]; horse and its rider he has cast [*qatal*] into the Sea." In v. 5, however, the expected pattern is disrupted: *תהמת יכסימו ירדו במצולת כמרבץ* "The deep waters covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone." The verb in v. 5a is a prefixed form (*יכסימו*), and yet its context obviously suggests that it is meant to depict a completed action in the past (cf. vv. 4, 5b). This problem persists in vv. 6–8, as prefixed forms repeatedly seem to indi-

21 Cf. Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 221–22; idem, *Old Testament*, 82–83.

22 See Susan Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition and Israelite Psalmody," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52 (1999): 19–46.

23 Cf. Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 45–51, who shows that the semantic and thematic parallels between Exodus 14 and 15 are abundant, even if the plot of the Song seems to be at odds with what precedes; also Fischer, "Das Schilfmeerlied," 37–40. Pace Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 131–32, who overemphasizes that the Song lacks references to the splitting of waters or to the Israelites' crossing on dry ground.

cate completed actions. Observing this grammatical phenomenon in a number of supposedly ancient Hebrew poems, including the Song, and comparing the grammar of these texts to that of Ugaritic poetry, Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman made their influential suggestion that, in these instances, "[t]he yqtl form is vari-temporal in usage, expressing past time as well as future time; it often appears (without the conjunction) in consecutive sequence with qtl forms, with a past meaning."²⁴ Drawing from Ugaritic analogies, Cross and Freedman argued that the aspect of the prefixed forms in these ancient poems depends upon the verbal context—in v. 5, for example, one can easily see that *יכס־מי* is meant to be a completed action in the past (cf. v. 12b), and in v. 9 the words of the enemy are meant to be unfulfilled desires, what the enemy had wanted to do to the Israelites. However, in the Song, one arrives at a *crux interpretum* in vv. 13–17. The verbal sequence in this latter part of the text looks like what one encounters in vv. 5–12, that is, a blend of qatal and yiqtol forms indicating completed actions in the past (e.g., v. 14a, *שמעו עמים ירגזון* "Peoples heard, they trembled"). Indeed, in their initial study of the Song, Cross and Freedman translated vv. 13–17 in past time.²⁵ But how then is one to understand the Song within its narrative context? Should one imagine that, having crossed the Reed Sea, the people have now entered Yahweh's holy resting place (*נוה קדש*, v. 13), his very own mountain (*הר נחלה*, v. 17)?²⁶

The problem of verbal aspect, then, effects geographical and temporal ambiguities in the Song and its narrative setting. Of course, scholars have proposed various solutions to these difficulties.²⁷ For example, Freedman, throughout his career, maintained that the verbal forms in vv. 13–17 represent completed action, and therefore he had to posit that the Song's setting is not the Reed Sea. In a 1999 article he writes that the Song includes a description of

the march through the wilderness and the climactic meeting between the people and their God at the holy mountain (vv. 13–17). ... Thus the poem places itself and its performance at Sinai rather than at the sea. According to its own chronology, the poem belongs to the Sinai setting, to which Moses and his followers came only some time after the victory at the sea.²⁸

²⁴ Cross and Freedman, *Studies*, 20.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, 37–38.

²⁶ Cf. the concerns of Childs, *Exodus*, 242.

²⁷ See, e.g., Shreckhise, "Finite Verb Translation," 287–310.

²⁸ Freedman, "Moses and Miriam," 71–72; cf. Smith, "Poetics of Exodus 15," 30–33.

Freedman, however, is left with the issue of narrative setting. If the Song was sung later, at Sinai, then why does one encounter it at this juncture in the story? He submits that “the editor ... ought to have put the poem at a different, later point in the narrative (after 19:2),” but this editor preferred “dramatic power and effect over chronological correctness.”²⁹ For my own part, I am not sure why or if the Song would lose any of its dramatic power in another context. Placing Freedman’s suggestion aside, if one takes the opposite approach and reads the verbs of vv. 13–17 as incomplete, future actions that foreshadow the imminent stop at Sinai and/or the eventual entrance into the promised land, then one is left with the original problem of shifting verbal aspect. That is, if vv. 13–17 are meant to depict future events, then why does this section seem to continue the odd verbal pattern of vv. 5–12? William Propp comments:

What makes reading the Song of the Sea so challenging is that, just as stanzas interpenetrate, so time blurs; events become metaphors for one another. In 15:16, what do the people cross: the Sea, the desert, a river, Canaan? All are possible, and all may be intended. And the goal of Israel’s journey is equally unclear. Throughout the Song, mixed metaphors and ambivalent language provoke multiple interpretations. In such a case, underreading may be more dangerous than overreading.³⁰

The Song’s sense of geographical place and its emplotment in the ongoing exodus narrative are obscured. The ambivalence of the Song’s grammatical aspect causes its lyrics to wander, as it were, between mighty waters and holy mountain, between present enemies and future ones, between crossing over the Sea and crossing into the promised land.

Clearly, the Song’s polyvalent sense of place and time contributed to its saliency as a site of memory in fourth-century Judah, as temple-based Jerusalemite literati maintained and read through their literary repertoire. The prominent symbols and themes in the Song—Yahweh’s awesome might, his conquering of foreign foes, his mastery of creation, wind and water, the redemption of his people and his leading them to a holy place, his eternal reign—are both timely and timeless. The striking images in the Song combined with the geographical and temporal fuzziness within its narrative setting make the Song easily translatable from one socio-cultural milieu to another. This is the stuff of which the best

29 Freedman, “Moses and Miriam,” 72.

30 William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 507.

social memories are made, mnemonic sites that a community can visit over and over, that it can easily pass on from generation to generation.

However, although the Song itself evinces geographical and temporal slippage, its events and its acts of divine redemption are anchored in the Sea. Yahweh's victory over Pharaoh obviously takes place at the Sea, and the people's journey to the deity's mountain—whether past, ongoing, or future—begins at the Sea. The readers'/singers' sense of place may wander from Sea to mountain and back again, but within the Song's narrative Yahweh initiates his actions at the waters of the Sea. At the Reed Sea, Yahweh completes his delivery of Israel: the people are redeemed (גאל, v. 13); they are acquired, (re)created (קנה, v. 16). My use of the word "delivery" here is an intentional pun. The Israelites are not only dramatically delivered from the hardships of Egyptian bondage and slavery; as they emerge from the Sea they are also metaphorically birthed, delivered as a new nation. Like Moses being drawn from the water to begin a new life, the Israelites pass through the Sea into new life, into an intimate relationship with Yahweh, who will guide them to his resting place. In the Song, then, Yahweh functions literally as the delivering warrior, crushing Pharaoh and his army with the powerful Sea, but he acts symbolically, too, as mother or midwife to Israel, giving birth to a new nation.³¹

The waters of the Sea—the place of divine victory and birth (i.e., creation), and the anchoring point for the Song's narrative—function as a central symbol in the Song. Scholars have often noted and discussed the interplay between Yahweh's victory at the Sea and the ancient Near Eastern Chaoskampf trope, the primordial battle between storm god and sea, the latter often portrayed as monstrous or serpentine (e.g., elements of the Baal Cycle and Enuma Elish; cf. Isa 27:1; Ps 29; etc.).³² Yet here in the Song, as in Genesis 1, there is no battle between Yahweh and the waters. To the contrary, in the Song, Yahweh has complete and utter control over the Sea; it submits to the deity's will, functioning as

31 Cf. Ilana Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel: National Narratives in the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 27–31, who calls the Song "the Song of the Birth of the Nation" (ibid., 29). In addition to Moses and Israel miraculously emerging from water, one thinks of Jonah, who is cast into the sea where the deep (תהום) surrounds him, only to be reborn, so to speak, when he emerges from the belly of the great fish onto dry land (Jon 1:15–2:11). See, e.g., Ehud Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud* (JSOTSup 367; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 137–43, who discusses the metanarrative of death and rebirth in Jonah 1–2 and its appropriation by various communities.

32 For discussion and bibliography, see, e.g., Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 112–44; Dozeman, "Song of the Sea," 101–4; Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 554–59; also F. Stolz, "Sea ים," in *DDD*, 737–42.

an inanimate tool in his victorious and creative act, not an imposing force with which to fight for supremacy (cf. v. 8).³³ Certainly, elements of the *Chaoskampf* are present in texts of the Hebrew Bible (see more below), and there are some hints of it in the Song, especially in Yahweh's cosmogonical birthing of Israel out of the waters.³⁴ But in the Song, the Sea is simply a passive object in the creative act.³⁵ Here the Sea signifies the place of creation, the mythological origin of new life.

From the Sea, the place of victorious birth, the deity leads his redeemed people to a place of rest, planting them on his mountain (vv. 13, 17).³⁶ Again the reader/singer encounters a highly symbolic site(s) with a complex network of mnemonic associations. The text's aforementioned geographical and temporal ambiguity has inspired a plethora of suggestions with regards to the identity of this locale(s).³⁷ Perhaps, within the book of Exodus, the most obvious immediate referent is Sinai and its vicinity, as Freedman and others have argued.³⁸ Yahweh conquers the enemy, giving Israel new life. Then he brings them through the wilderness to the foot of the holy mountain, to the threshold of his abode, where the redeemed Israel is to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש), unique amongst the peoples of the world, all of which belong to the deity (Exod 19:5-6). Thus, the Song, to some extent, memorializes the entire journey from Egypt to Sinai, the crossing of Sea and desert to the deity's place of inhabitation.

33 Cf. J. Richard Middleton, "Created in the Image of a Violent God? The Ethical Problem of the Conquest of Chaos in Biblical Creation Texts," *Int* 58 (2004): 341-55 (343).

34 Cf. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 558-59.

35 Moreover, the Song, again like Genesis 1, lacks a genuinely *cosmic* enemy. The victory over Pharaoh and his army, rather than bringing to mind the trope of *Chaoskampf*, makes one think of the divine warrior who fights earthly battles for his/her chosen human regent (e.g., Assur warring for Sennacherib or Ishtar for Assurbanipal). However, here in the Song, Yahweh is warrior deity *and* king, fighting for his chosen people and bringing them peace. Hence the the terror and paralysis of Canaan's inhabitants.

36 Just as the precise location of these geographical descriptions is ambiguous, so is the relationship between the various descriptions in vv. 13 and 17. E.g., are the resting place (נוה, v. 13) and the mountain (הר, v. 17) one and the same, or do they refer to separate and distinct loci? Are they within the same vicinity, or are they distant stops on the people's journey? Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional; cf. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 569.

37 For surveys and discussion, see Smith, "Poetics of Exodus 15," 30-31; Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 562-71; and Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 80-96.

38 E.g., Freedman, "Moses and Miriam," 71-72; Smith, "Poetics of Exodus 15," 30-33; Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 95-96.

Fourth-century Jerusalemite literati singing/reading the Song, therefore, could easily imagine this specific, epic event from Israel's distant past, the formative and foundational moment in the people's long lasting relationship with Yahweh, when the deity officially identified them as his specially chosen group. As discussed above, the Song is immersed in its narratival, historiographical context. At the same time, however, the Song would engender present and future images of Israel's story. In other words, it draws from and contributes to its narratival setting in Exodus, affecting understandings of that particular narrative, but it also transcends this setting, entering into metanarratival discourse. This is where social memory comes to the fore, the cultural framing of the community's present and future in terms and images of its past. In the minds of Judean tradents of the text, Yahweh's resting place, his mountain and sanctuary, would signify at once Sinai, Jerusalem, Zion, and indeed the entire promised land.³⁹ The obscure and polyvalent geographical locale(s), to which Yahweh brings his people in the Song, oscillates between the people's journey from Egypt long ago, their return from Babylon in recent memory, and their future role as the centerpiece and focal point of Yahweh's worldwide dominion. The literal, metaphorical, and temporal distance between Sinai and Zion thus blurs.⁴⁰ In addition to its obvious place in the exodus story, its memory and representation of this seminal event, the Song—with its movement from Sea to mountain, passing through waters of birth into the holy abode—had present and future significance for the community in fourth-century Judah. It memorialized the current (re)establishment of Israel and the temple in Jerusalem; it memorialized, too, Zion's future rise to universal prominence, when all the nations of Yahweh's possession would stream to the deity's holy mountain to receive his instruction (Isa 2:1–4; Mic 4:1–5).

39 If one accepts that the *primary* social location of Judean literati in the fourth century BCE—those codifying and reading Judean collections of literature—was the Jerusalem temple, as I do here, then potential symbolic associations with Gilgal, Shiloh, or the northern kingdom of Israel would be minimal, secondary at best. In my opinion, mnemonic connections with Sinai and Jerusalem/Zion would have occupied most (if not all) of the social memory working in and around the Song.

40 Cf. Smith, "Poetics of Exodus 15," 33, who builds on Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 188. See also Levenson's full discussion of the many links between the two holy mountains, *Sinai and Zion*, 187–217.

2. Isaiah, Israel, and the Sea

Having addressed the Song itself, I now move on to the second major line of inquiry in this essay: how did the Song and its tropes function in post-monarchic Judean prophetic discourse? Or more precisely, how does Isaianic discourse employ the Song and its story, its memory, its memorializations? Isaianic discourse is multifaceted and complex, not easily identified with or contained within particular historical timeframes or communities.⁴¹ Ostensibly and superficially, the content of Isaiah, the book, is set in the Neo-Assyrian period, towards the end of Judah's monarchic history, as its opening lines state (cf. Isa 1:1). However, to appropriate the thoughts of the late Robert Carroll, the book appears to be a "palimpsest of multiple discourses," a dialectical and helical text, moving back and forth between various times, places, and communal and individual concerns.⁴² The lengthy and complex text thus operates as a polyvalent site of convergence for social memory; it contains and perpetuates memory on its own, as a distinct book, but it also exchanges ideas with other prophetic texts and with the larger corpus of Judean literature. To be sure, this is true for any book within the Judean collections. Prophetic books, however, present perhaps the most intriguing avenue for exploring social memory along these lines, because of their poetical, often ambiguous and obscure language, and because of their pronounced interest in historiographical concerns, i.e., their fascination with (re)writing things past, present, and future in Judah's/Israel's story.

As I mentioned earlier, references and parallels to the Song, the crossing of the Sea, and the exodus story in general are ubiquitous in the Hebrew Bible as a whole, and the same holds true for the individual book of Isaiah, especially if one considers the interwoven and related motifs of exile. Rather than offering a comprehensive analysis of the

41 Of course, here I refer of the *book* of Isaiah, which probably emerged as a product of the late Persian/early Hellenistic period. Among the innumerable scholarly works on the formation of the book, see the introductory discussion in Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), esp. 83–92.

42 Cf. his thoughts on the "city" in the book of Isaiah, in Robert P. Carroll, "City of Chaos, City of Stone, City of Flesh: Urbanscapes in Prophetic Discourses," in *Every City shall be Forsaken: Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak; JSOTSup 330; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 45–61 (esp. 48). See also Francis Landy's introductory thoughts in his "Exile in the Book of Isaiah," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 241–56.

Song and Isaianic discourse, I focus briefly on a selection of texts in Isaiah, in which there are connections to the Song, its language, and its socio-cultural tropes: viz., Isa 10:5–12:6; 43:1–44:5; 51:9–11; and 63:7–14. Again, the ultimate goal is to explore how the Song and its narrative functioned within prophetic discourse in Judah in the fourth-century and later, as Judean scribes compiled, produced, and read their authoritative collections of literature.

Isaiah 10:5–12:6—famous for the woe oracle against Assyria (10:5–19), and for the enigmatic and utopian description of the “shoot from the stump of Jesse” (חטר מגזע ישי) (11:1–9)—concludes with a series of “in that day” (ביום ההוא) statements (10:20, 27; 11:10, 11; 12:1, 4), which reveal what will happen when Yahweh eventually turns on mighty Assyria and restores the faithful remnant of Israel. In a deeply ironic twist, Yahweh pronounces judgment upon the arrogant king of Assyria (10:12),⁴³ the very king whom Yahweh uses to punish “a godless nation” (גוי חנף), viz., Israel (10:6).⁴⁴ After the punishment of Israel is complete and the tables are turned on Assyria, a portion of Israel will remain nonetheless (10:20–23), a Davidic leader will emerge to gather the scattered remnant (11:10–12), and with the miraculous help of Yahweh

43 Isa 10:13–14, the boastful words of the Assyrian monarch, evince knowledge of actual Assyrian royal propaganda; see, e.g., Peter Machinist, “Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah,” *JAOS* 103 (1983): 719–37 (esp. 725). The text of Isaiah takes up this propaganda in order to assert Yahweh’s supremacy and rulership *over* the powerful Assyrian empire. Hence a sort of divine imperial mimesis, a hybridization of Judahite/Judean culture, in which the chief deity and his people themselves become imperial, universally powerful and preminent. Cf. the image of Yahweh felling the majestic trees of Lebanon in Isa 10:34, which recalls Assyrian “scorched earth tactics.” See, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 261–62; and for a detailed discussion of Assyrian siege technics, Jacob L. Wright, “Warfare and Wanton Destruction,” *JBL* 127 (2008): 423–58. The imperialization of Yahweh is also clearly evident in the so-called royal psalms; see, e.g., Erhard S. Gerstenberger, “‘World Dominion’ in Yahweh Kingship Psalms,” *HBT* 23 (2001): 192–210. For more on empire and the prophets, see Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Yehudite Collection of Prophetic Books and Imperial Contexts: Some Observations,” forthcoming.

44 At first this “godless nation” appears to be the northern kingdom (cf. Isa 9:7–20), and Judah seems only to be *threatened* by Assyria (cf. Isa 10:24, which reassures the inhabitants of Zion); see, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 252–54, who reads Isa 10:5–14 within the historical context of Judah’s Assyrian crisis at the close of the eighth century BCE. However, read synchronically alongside each other in the late Persian period, Isaiah 10 and 11 blur the boundary between north and south, offering a pan-Israelite perspective in which all Israel receives punishment. One can certainly read ch. 11 as a continuation of 10:33–34—syntax links the two chapters, and 11:1 implies that Yahweh has indeed felled the tree of Judah too. Cf. Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 1–12* (trans. Ulrich Berges; HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 303, who calls chs. 10 and 11 a diptych.

the reconstituted Israel will leave Assyrian bondage (11:15–16), to return home to Zion (12:6).

Within this prophetic text, which contains a narrative structure, there are several obvious connections with the exodus and the events at the Sea (e.g., 10:26; 11:15–12:2). Indeed, Isa 12:2 contains a nearly precise linguistic intertext with Exod 15:2.⁴⁵ Thus, for readers keenly familiar with these texts—as Jerusalemite literati no doubt were—there exists a *de facto* mnemonic association between the Song (not just the exodus in general) and this prophetic narrative of divine judgment and redemption in Isaiah. Note, too, the repeated references to Mount Zion and Jerusalem (10:12, 24, 32; 12:6) and the mention of Yahweh’s “holy mountain” (הַר קֹדֶשׁ) (11:9). Here in Isaiah, Yahweh seems to dole out his punishment both from Zion/Jerusalem and upon Zion/Jerusalem (cf. 10:12; 10:32–11:1); likewise, the faithful remnant dwells within Zion itself (cf. 10:24; 12:6), but they also stream towards it from afar, towards the just leader who will rise above the nations on the holy mount (cf. 11:9, 10–16).⁴⁶

The temporally and geographically ambiguous Song of the Sea anticipates the journey from Sea to mountain, but also looks back on this journey, as discussed above. This particular text, couched in a prophetic book, looks forward to the full and ideal restoration of Zion in the future, the redemption and return of scattered Israel, while also assuming the inevitable completion of this divine word—thus, in a sense, it looks back too. Fourth-century Judeans, though, like singers of the Song of the Sea, likely imagined themselves wandering between initiation and completion, rejoicing from re-inhabited Zion but at the same time awaiting its full restoration and elevation to glory. Yahweh had indeed extended his hand to redeem and (re)create (קָנָה) Israel (11:11; cf. 11:15; Exod 15:16b–17),⁴⁷ but Judah had yet to regain its former strength and was hardly a benchmark for the surrounding nations.

45 Ps 118:14 also contains a near-quote of this verse.

46 N.B. the mention of Philistia, Edom, and Moab in Isa 11:14, which recalls the fearful nations in Exod 15:14–15. On the fearful nations, see, e.g., Brenner, *Song of the Sea*, 160–74; and compare Russell, *Song of the Sea*, 75–79, 104, and 189 n. 39.

47 Isa 11:11a reads, וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹסִיף אֲדָנִי שְׁנִית יָדוֹ לִקְנוֹת אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ “On that day the Lord will again stretch out his hand to redeem the remnant of his people.” In its immediate context, this statement recalls Yahweh stretching out his hand (יָד) in anger *against* Israel (cf. Isa 9:11, 17; 10:4); this time, however, he reaches out to redeem the people (cf. Isa 11:15, which explicitly refers to the exodus). Yahweh’s יָד in Isaiah 11 recalls Moses’ outstretched hand/arm (יָד) in Exod 14 and Yahweh’s hand/arm (יָד/זְרוֹעַ/יָמִין) in Exod 15, mentioned above. Especially in the Song of the Sea, Yahweh’s hand both smites the enemy (e.g., Exod 15:6, 12; contra the enemy’s impotent יָד in 15:9), and it establishes a sanctuary for the people (cf. Exod 15:17). Here in Isaiah, as

Isaiah 43:1–44:5 is another narrativel, prophetic text that implicitly and explicitly brings to mind the exodus and its Song.⁴⁸ The text begins with a pronouncement of a “second exodus,” a gathering of Yahweh’s people from the corners of the earth (43:1–7).⁴⁹ Repeatedly, Yahweh tells the people, אִל־תִּירָא “Fear not!” (43:1, 5; cf. 44:2), for they are his creation (בָּרָא), whom he has formed (יָצַר) and redeemed (גָּאֵל),⁵⁰ and he will be with them and protect them as they pass through (עָבַר) water and walk through fire (43:2; cf. Exod 15:16b). Apparently imagining a courtroom-like setting,⁵¹ the text then declares Yahweh’s ultimate supremacy as divine victor and deliverer of his people (43:8–13), indeed, his sole existence as divine being: לִפְנֵי לֹא־נוֹצָר אֵל וְאַחֲרַי לֹא יִהְיֶה “Before me no god was formed, and after me none shall be” (43:10b). Three divine speeches—marked by the prophetic expression כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה—follow. In the first (43:14–15), Yahweh, the king and creator, promises to visit Babylon, the place of exile.⁵² In the second (43:16–28), the deity announces that he is doing something new (עֲשֵׂה חֲדָשָׁה) (43:19), something

elsewhere, the divine hand is an agent of punishment, redemption, and (re)creation, an image that harkens back to Yahweh’s initial victorious and redemptive acts in Egypt and at the Reed Sea; cf. Beuken, *Jesaja* 1–12, 323.

48 Delimiting Isaiah 40–55 into sections and subsections, and interpreting the individual sections with regards to the larger context, is a difficult task, as it is with most prophetic texts. Simply browsing recent commentaries reveals ongoing disagreement over demarcation of the text. See, e.g., Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah* (ed. Peter Machinist; trans. Margaret Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 143–208; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002), 219–38 (esp. 220–21); John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55* (2 vols.; ICC; London: T & T Clark, 2006), 1.17–21 and 1.253–302; Ulrich Berges, *Jesaja 40–48* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 288–332. Here I align myself closely with Blenkinsopp’s division of the text, although I have left out 44:6–8, which he sees as a sort of discursive connector, linking up with what precedes and with 44:21–23 (see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 234–38).

49 On “second exodus” in Isaiah, see, e.g., Ulrich Berges, “Der zweite Exodus im Jesajabuch: Auszug oder Verwandlung?” in *Das Manna fällt auch heute noch: Festschrift für Erich Zenger* (ed. F.-L. Hossfeld and L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger; Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 77–95; Konrad Schmid, “Neue Schöpfung als Überbietung des neuen Exodus,” in *Schriftgelehrte Traditionsliteratur* (FAT 77; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 185–205; Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (VTSup 139; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 155–203.

50 See 43:1, 7, 14–15, 21; 44:2; cf. Exod 15:13, 16b–17. בָּרָא and יָצַר do not occur in the Song of the Sea, but they resonate with the verbal root קָנָה (Exod 15:16b), which combines aspects of creation and redemption. Note also the phrase עַמּוֹ יִצְרָתִי לִי “a people whom I have formed for myself” (Isa 43:21) and its use of the rare relative pronoun וּ. Nearly identical phraseology occurs in Exod 15:13, 16b, with the verbal roots גָּאֵל and קָנָה, respectively.

51 Cf. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 161–63; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 223–25.

52 On the difficulties of reading Isa 43:14, see, e.g., Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah* 40–55, 1.293–96.

that recalls the past exodus from Egypt, but that is also circumstantially and consequentially different. Yahweh decries past sins, both forgetting and remembering the people's iniquities, breaking ties with former Israel and yet imagining the redemption of new Israel with old tropes. The third speech (44:1–5) then pictures this renewal, sprouts of new growth thriving on nourishing waters, a new Israel receiving Yahweh's spirit (רוח) (44:3).

In this passage of divine speeches is an interesting blend of recalling and forgetting the past actions of Yahweh and the past actions of the people. As stated, Yahweh repeatedly reminds Israel that he is their redeemer, their maker and creator; he has been with them since birth (44:2), since the time when he triumphantly brought them through the waters of the Sea without harm (43:16–17; cf. 43:2)—the text again memorializes the nation's special relationship with the deity, emphasizing Yahweh's role as birthing and protective parent. And yet, paradoxically, the audience is told, *אלֹהֵינוּ רָאשֵׁנוֹת וְקִדְמִיּוֹת אֶל־תִּחַבְּנֵנוּ* "Do not remember former things, and do not dwell upon things of old!" (43:18). Yahweh is defined in terms of the past, but the people are somehow to forget that past.⁵³ Adding to the paradox, the text imagines Yahweh's new thing—his making of a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert (43:19–20)—by playing with references to the exodus and journey to Canaan, events from long ago: e.g., the new wilderness-road links up with the past Sea-road, and the drying of the Sea is juxtaposed with the watering of the wilderness.⁵⁴ As Yahweh provided then, he will provide now.

Yahweh's speech is not over, though, and the divine words in Isa 43:22–28 again pick up the theological and ideological interplay between remembering and forgetting, between deeds past and present—perhaps with some intentional irony.⁵⁵ After Yahweh levels a series of accusations against Israel, the deity declares that he wipes away the people's transgressions, he remembers (זָכַר) their sins no more (v. 25). Then he abruptly states, *הַזְכִּירֵנִי נִשְׁפֹּטָה יָחַד סָפֵר אֶתָּה לִמְעַן תִּצְדָּק* "Remind me! Let us go to trial together. You yourself present (your case) so that you may be proved right" (v. 26). Yahweh forgets Israel's sins, but, ironical-

53 N.B. the divine speech in this section only actually begins with v. 18. Isa 43:16–17 contains descriptions of Yahweh, introducing the speaker and his past accomplishments. The use of the participles *הַנִּזְכָּר* (v. 16) and *הַמִּזְכֵּר* (v. 17) makes this clear.

54 Cf. William H. C. Propp, *Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and Its Mythological Background* (HSM 40; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 101–2; but see also Tiemeyer, *Comfort of Zion*, 182–84, who downplays connections with the exodus, reading the text as a more general wilderness metaphor.

55 Cf. Berges, *Jesaja 40–48*, 312.

ly it seems, he cannot remember the people's righteousness. Past Israel has become nothing to him; from the very beginning they were a sinful people, and so he has given them up (vv. 27–28). With the removal of their sins they are reduced to nil. If sinfulness was the people's defining characteristic, then the divine forgetting of sins effects a loss of identity and even a cessation of existence for the people. The collocation of *לֹא אֶזְכֹּר* "I no longer remember" and *הִזְכִּירֵנִי* "Remind me!" heightens the sense of drama. Yahweh's juridical challenge in v. 26 appears to be ironical and rhetorical; in the divine mind there is no one there to challenge him, no one righteous in Israel.

But the passage continues in Isa 44:1–5, promising new life for Israel, a re-creation of Yahweh's people. Again, the deity announces, *אַל תִּירָא* "Fear not!" (v. 2), linking this speech with the divine illocutions in 43:1–7. Moreover, in this speech water appears conspicuously as a symbol of birth and creation (vv. 3–4). The metaphorical wordplay on *זֶרַע* "seed/offspring" is obvious: Yahweh will (re)plant his people (cf. Exod 15:17), and, with a generous outpouring of water, the new Israel will sprout (*צִמָּח*) from the dry ground (cf. 43:19; Gen 2:5, 9).

As in the Song of the Sea, water functions in Isa 43:1–44:5 as a key symbolic site, a sign of both deliverance and birth. The passage is bookended with images of redemption and creation, both tied to water: Yahweh will protect his people as they pass through dangerous water (43:2), and he will water his new creation with his spirit (*רוּחַ*) (44:3). Also, the passage hinges on images that recall the miracles at the Sea and in the wilderness: during the exodus long ago, Yahweh brought Israel through the water, crushing the Egyptians with it (43:16–17); now he will provide nourishment for Israel in the wilderness, bringing life-giving water to the desert and to his thirsty people (43:20).

One should note, the image of the holy mountain/Zion/Jerusalem, the ultimate destination of the redeemed people—which is prevalent in the Song and in Isa 10:5–12:6—is absent in Isa 43:1–44:5. There is no geographical transition in the text, no movement between Sea and mountain, between scattered exile and Zion. However, the tropes of the Sea and the exodus, redemption in the wilderness, and the planting and growth of a new Israel, are clearly present, helping to structure and mnemonically frame Yahweh's speeches. Thus, instead of geographical liminality, Judean readers of Isa 43:1–44:5 experienced redemptive and existential liminality, a movement between human transgression and divine forgiveness, between annihilation and new creation, between forgetting and remembering past deeds and misdeeds, and imagining new life in the future. However, although lacking a sense of definite place or movement towards an ultimate destination,

the text nonetheless imagines a generic wilderness wasteland, inhabited by the seed of Israel, in need of divine watering and nourishment—an image that reflects post-monarchic Judah and Jerusalem, a land that had dealt with major political upheavals, economic stagnation, and, in the late fourth century, Alexander's conquest and the prospect of Hellenistic socio-cultural hybridization.⁵⁶ Perhaps the destination had been reached, but renewal was incomplete.⁵⁷

I now turn to Isa 51:9–11, which again recalls the Song of the Sea, but which explicitly utilizes West Semitic mythological motifs that have not been overtly present in the texts examined thus far.⁵⁸ Because scholars have discussed the mythological language of this text at length, I will not provide a detailed discussion. I would like only to point out aspects of the Chaoskampf trope, evident in the references to the chaos monster(s), רהב and תנין,⁵⁹ as well as the further interweaving of exodus and creation imagery: e.g., the mighty arm (זרוע) of Yahweh, the drying of the Sea (ים) and the deep (תהום), the crossing over (עבר) of those redeemed (גאל) (vv. 9–10).⁶⁰ Moreover, there is the joyful entrance into Zion, the event to which the passage looks forward (v. 11).

With regards to Chaoskampf and the struggle between Yahweh and Sea, although there is no description of a divine battle, there is

56 It appears that Hellenism did not have widespread influence in Judah until the early third century; cf. Oded Lipschits and Oren Tal, "The Settlement Archaeology of the Province of Judah: A Case Study," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century BCE* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 33–52.

57 See William S. Morrow, "Comfort for Jerusalem: The Second Isaiah as Counselor to Refugees," *BTB* 34 (2004): 80–86, who argues that chs. 40–55, in a sixth-century BCE context, attempted to address the community's "learned helplessness" in the aftermath of catastrophe and exile. By the late Persian period, hopelessness no doubt waned, but the divine redemption promised by these texts was not yet fully realized.

58 For recent treatments of Isa 51:9–11, see Jeremy M. Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9–11 and the Rhetorical Appropriation and Subversion of Hostile Theologies," *JBL* 126 (2007): 271–303; Hendrik Bosman, "Myth, Metaphor, or Memory? The Allusions to Creation and Exodus in Isaiah 51:9–11 as a Theological Response to Suffering during the Exile," in *Exile and Suffering* (ed. Bob Becking and Dirk Human; OTS 50; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 71–81; and bibliographies therein.

59 See, e.g., K. Spronk, "Rahab," and G. C. Heider, "Tannin," in *DDD* 684–86 and 834–36, respectively; also John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 88–101 and *passim*.

60 Tiemeyer, *Comfort of Zion*, 193–94 (following Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated* [BZAW 341; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005], 292–95), argues that Isa 51:9–11 lacks a creation motif, and that the text imagines only the exodus. However, *pace* Tiemeyer and Watson, the exodus, the victory at the Reed Sea, is an act of creation. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 330–35, for further comment on the imagery in this text and its parallels.

mention of a supernatural enemy, thus distinguishing this text from Exodus 15 and Genesis 1, discussed above. The fact that Rahab/Tannin is cut into pieces (חִצָּב Hiph.) and pierced through (חָלַל Poel) suggests a violent interaction between the supernatural beings, even if the enemy stood no chance against Yahweh in the first place (cf. Pharaoh/Egypt in Exodus 14–15).⁶¹ This primordial recollection then moves into a depiction of Yahweh drying up the Sea, redeeming his people. The mythologically loaded image of victory and deliverance at the Sea, carrying symbols of exodus and creation, serves as the preface to the awaited return to Zion. John Day comments, “Rahab is both the monster defeated at creation and Egypt at the time of the Exodus and also, by implication, it may be argued, the thought is extended to Babylon at the time of the prophet himself. The return from exile in Babylon is both a new creation and a new Exodus.”⁶² The text is thus a rich site of memory, a dynamic blend of myth and metaphor that undoubtedly spoke to Judah’s post-monarchic condition.⁶³ If one reads the text in a Neo-Babylonian diaspora setting, perhaps its compositional milieu, as Day does, then the text looks forward to the actual restoration of Jerusalem/Zion after the destruction of 586 BCE.⁶⁴ But if one reads it as part of a socio-mnemonic system in fourth-century Jerusalemite literature, as I do here, then again one finds a text that plays with temporal and redemptive liminality. Isaiah 51:9–11 recognizes (or re-cognizes) the might of Yahweh in his creative and redemptive acts of the distant and near past, including the reestablishment of Jerusalem as a cult center under Persian rule, but it also waits for and looks forward to the day when Zion will reach its divinely promised zenith.

Each of the texts explored thus far evinces hopeful liminality, an image of a people moving toward complete and final redemption, toward a home in the midst of Yahweh’s dwelling. These texts mostly look forward: the people are almost there, almost at Yahweh’s resting place. However, Isa 63:7–14, which memorializes the exodus as part of a lengthy lament (63:7–64:11), emphasizes the negative aspect of this liminality: they are not yet there, still traveling through the wilder-

61 Pace Bosman, “Myth, Metaphor, or Memory?” 77, who states, “...one has to acknowledge the absence of any combat or chaos—in an almost hyperbolic way Yhwh destroys all adversaries....” Absolute victory does not equate to a total lack of combat. Taken on its own, the text says nothing about what happened *before* the slaughtering of Rahab/Tannin; it only tells the reader that Yahweh was indeed victorious.

62 Day, *God’s Conflict*, 92.

63 Cf. Bosman, “Myth, Metaphor, or Memory?” 77–81.

64 Tiemeyer, *Comfort of Zion*, 195, contra Day, posits that the text’s primary setting was not the diaspora.

ness.⁶⁵ Sometimes, a journey can be so long and challenging that the traveler loses sight of the destination—one thinks of a child asking her parents, “Are we there yet?” Here, Judah and Zion/Jerusalem is still a wasteland (64:9–10), and the lament ends with a sobering question for the deity: תחשה ותענו עד־מאד “Will you be silent and afflict us forever?” (64:11). This prophetic lament, thus, balances the more hopeful messages seen in the texts above. To be sure, Isa 43:1–44:5, with its blatant accusations against Israel, its forgetting and remembering of the people’s sinful past, also brings to mind the negative side of liminal existence; but despite the paradoxical recall of forgotten sins, the overriding message of 43:1–44:5 is one of hope, the joyful knowledge of Yahweh’s new Israel, his watering of the barren desert. The lament of Isa 63:7–64:11 plays devil’s advocate with the forward-looking hope of the passages discussed above and other texts in Isaiah (e.g., Isa 62).⁶⁶

Indeed, the theological rhetoric of the lament in Isa 63:7–64:11, its ideological use of memory and memorialization, contrasts Yahweh’s remembering and forgetting the past in Isa 43:1–44:5. At the outset of the lament, the speaker declares: חסדי יהוה אזכיר תהלת יהוה “The faithful, gracious acts of Yahweh I will memorialize, the praiseworthy deeds of

65 This lament shares much in common with the laments of the Psalter, with one notable difference: it lacks any statement of faith that Yahweh will, in fact, hear the people’s cries and come to their salvation (contra, e.g., Ps 69:34, 36); cf. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 258. Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66* (trans. D. M. G. Stalker; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 392, says that this poignant passage is “probably the most powerful psalm of communal lamentation in the Bible.” Perhaps the lack of response from Yahweh, or the lack of any hope that such a response will occur, gives the passage its power.

66 One should also consider the relationship between chs. 63–64 and 65–66. Scholars often see chs. 65–66 as a response to the lament. Cf. Christophe Nihan, “Ethnicity and Identity in Isaiah 56–66,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 67–104 (esp. 71–72 and 86–87, with further references). Nihan argues that chs. 65–66 present a view that is even more somber than that of chs. 63–64—the lament presents the *entire* community as Yahweh’s people (cf. 64:8), whereas chs. 65–66 presuppose a division between the servants of Yahweh (i.e., true “Israel”) and the apostates of the community. However, one should keep in mind the generic differences between the lament and chs. 65–66: the former is a human complaint, presumably voiced by a pious speaker, while the latter is Yahweh’s address to the community at large. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 268, following Duhm, comments “[T]hose addressed in 65:1–7, who are practicing ‘pagan’ cults, eating pork, and so on, have little in common with the plaintive penitents on whose behalf the psalm immediately preceding was composed. This would suggest that, though a connection does exist [between chs. 63–64 and 65–66], with chs. 65–66 we are in a quite different situation.” The Jerusalemite literati surely thought of themselves as the lamenting in-group, the ones longing for Yahweh’s presence, as opposed to the out-group receiving Yahweh’s criticisms.

Yahweh" (63:7; cf. Exod 15:11, 13). Yahweh has implored Israel not to remember (Isa 43:18) and has declared that he has forgotten past sins (Isa 43:25), and yet his people insist on commemorating his past acts of deliverance and redemption. Moreover, they insist on remembering their own misdeeds, which caused the divine warrior, the one who originally fought for them at the Sea (cf. Exod 15:3), to turn against them (63:10).

Just as the ultimately hopeful text of 43:1–44:5 hinges on its image of Yahweh bringing the people through mighty waters, so the lament hinges on a similar image:

וַיִּזְכֹּר יְמֵי־עוֹלָם מֹשֶׁה עִמּוֹ אִיָּה הַמַּעֲלֵם מִיָּם אֶת רַעִי צִאֲנוּ אִיָּה הַשֶּׁם בִּקְרָבוֹ אֶת־רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ

Then his people remembered the days of old, Moses (the one who drew up from the water). Where is the one who brought them up from the Sea with shepherds of his flock? Where is the one who put in his/its midst his holy רוח? (Isa 63:11)

There are multiple ambiguities in this verse, beginning with the main verb, וַיִּזְכֹּר "he remembered." Precisely who is remembering? Is it Yahweh? Moses? The people? Each is a masculine noun that fits grammatically and could potentially function as the subject. "His people" (עמו) fits best in the context, although it is odd, syntactically, for the subject to be so distant from the main verb.⁶⁷ One might also struggle to understand the reference to מֹשֶׁה "Moses" here. The reference, however, carries a dual meaning that expands the semiotic possibilities of the memorialization. Echoing the etymology provided in Exod 2:10, viz. that Moses was drawn up out of the water, the word מֹשֶׁה conflates the man Moses, the great prophet and hero through whom Yahweh worked, and Yahweh himself, the one who was ultimately responsible for drawing the people up out of the Sea (and thus up out of Egypt).⁶⁸ Yahweh forgets the people's sin and cannot remember any righteousness (cf. Isa 43:22–28), but the people, while remembering Yahweh's past redemp-

67 The general consensus is that the people remembered. Most English translations, therefore, read, "they remembered" or "his people remembered" (e.g., NRSV; NJPS). Cf. Westermann, *Isaiah* 40–66, 385; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 252; also Burkard M. Zapff, *Jesaja* 56–66 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2006), 408.

68 The LXX prefers this reading. It states, καὶ ἐμνήσθη ἡμερῶν αἰωνίων ὁ ἀναβιβάσας ἐκ τῆς γῆς τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων "and he remembered the days of eternity, the one who brought up from the land, the shepherd of sheep." The final clause of v. 11 further engenders semiotic ambiguity in the memory: note the placement of Yahweh's "holy רוח." Is it set within Moses? the people? the Sea? Is it water-like, nourishing and empowering spirit (cf. Isa 44:3)? or is it the water-splitting blast from the deity's nostrils (cf. Exod 15:8)?

tion, cannot foresee his future new creation. Where is the loyal redeemer now? Where is the one who brought Israel up out of Egypt? Where is the one whose right hand (ימין) and great, glorious arm (זרוע) separated waters and shattered enemies (63:12; cf. Exod 15:5, 12, 16)?

Therefore, the lament of Isa 63:7–64:11—contrary to the divine speeches of Isa 43:1–44:5—does not try to forget Israel’s ugly history, its present state of disarray, and challenges Yahweh to remember his past deeds, to come again as creator and redeemer. Fourth-century Jerusalemite literati had hope, visions of future glory, but the present bitter reality was always in plain sight. Both of these Isaianic passages recount the story of Israel’s ancient beginnings, the people’s victorious birth at the mighty waters of the Sea, in attempts to cope with the liminality of ongoing but not yet complete restoration. One text looks forward, emphasizing new creation, trying to forget hardships past and present; the other looks back, unable to ignore present hardships, nostalgically and tragically reminiscing about the days of old, when Yahweh powerfully acted for and amongst the people, rather than against them.

3. To Conclude

In this essay I have tried to show how the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1–21) might have evoked a sense of geographical, temporal, and redemptive liminality in its late Persian/early Hellenistic-period readers/singers. The text moves between Sea and mountain, wilderness and promised land, birth and maturity, Sinai and Zion, between redemption past, present, and future. Likewise, I have tried to show that, when Isaianic discourse refers to and appropriates the Song and its tropes, the texts evoke similarly liminal states of existence, mostly with hopeful visions (e.g., Isa 10:5–12:6; 43:1–44:5; 51:9–11), but also with pessimistic longing (e.g., Isa 63:7–14). The prophetic discourse in the book of Isaiah builds upon the monumental sites of memory in the Song and its narrative emplotment, forming a complex web of mnemonic associations with the Sea, the salient symbol of victory and birth. To be sure, the memory of the Sea interacts with and depends upon other mnemonic loci in these prophetic texts (e.g., creation motifs).⁶⁹ Indeed, that is how social memory works. The fourth-century Jerusalemite commu-

69 Cf. Schmid, “Neue Schöpfung,” 188–93; also C. L. Crouch, “Adapting the Cosmological Tradition in Isaiah 40–45,” *SJOT* 25 (2011): 260–75, and literature cited there.

nity that produced and read the book of Isaiah (and other prophetic books) saw itself as bearers of the past—the distant, near, and present past—but they also recognized a rupture in their story that set them apart from that past: they were a new Israel, a new thing, on which and through which Yahweh was still working. They remembered and imagined their story with interwoven socio-cultural tropes, including primordial creation, kingship human and divine, exile, and of course Yahweh's life-giving, nation-birthing victory at the Reed Sea. They remembered to forget, to (re)create.⁷⁰

70 I dedicate this essay to my dear friend and teacher, Francis Landy, whose seminars on Isaiah provided the initial inspiration for this study. Francis currently finds himself in the midst of his own exodus, from the frigid prairies to the warm coastlands—i.e., retirement, after a long and distinguished tenure at the University of Alberta. As he settles into his new home by the sea, may his search for the beautiful and enigmatic continue.

Imagining Water: The Overflowing Stream in Isa 66:12

SONYA KOSTAMO

As one of the latest passages in the book of Isaiah, the metaphor of the overflowing stream in Isaiah 66:12 reflects the discursive preferences of Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud within a community that likely possessed and read the book of Isaiah.¹ Looking at the other occurrences of the root שטף in the book of Isaiah is important for understanding the background of the employment in Isaiah 66:12, which contributed to the larger nexus of associations related to this term as well as being influenced by them. The present study analyzes the utilization of שטף from an ancient reader-centered approach to explore the interconnections of conceptual fields, which were evoked within the reading community of Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud. This group of ancient readers contributed certain semantic expectations when reading Isa 66:12, which were shaped by shared knowledge that came from reading the book of Isaiah.² The employment of שטף in Isaiah indicates that

1 While the debate continues regarding the dating of the latest portions of the book of Isaiah, this essay works from the premise that by the time of Ben Sira (e.g., the Isaianic language in Sir 48:24–25), or in the early second century BCE, all three sections of Isaiah (Isa 1–39, 40–55, 56–66) were being read a literary unit.

2 A fuller study of the use of this term in the Hebrew Bible is beyond the limited scope of this paper, but within the Hebrew Bible, forms of the root שטף occur thirty-seven times: Lev 6:21 [Eng. 6:28]; 15:11, 12; 1 Kgs 22:58; Isa 8:8; 10:22; 28:2, 15, 17, 18; 30:28; 43:2; 66:12; Jer 8:6; 47:2 [2x]; Ezek 13:11, 13; 16:9; 38:22; Nah 1:8; Ps 32:6; 69:3, 16 [Eng. 69:2, 15]; 78:20; 124:4; Job 14:19; 38:25; Prov 27:4; Song 8:7; Dan 9:26; 11:10, 22 [2x], 26, 40; 2 Chr 32:4. The overflow of the water in Jer 47:2 is suggested by the term “its fullness” (וּמְלֹאָהּ). The noun form usage implies flood in Nah 1:8 and follows the pattern of reflecting this calamity as destructive judgment. The term is used in parallel with terminology for rain with phrase שוּטָף גֶּשֶׁם in Ezek 13:11, 13; 38:22. Psalms pervasively uses the term to depict human trials and threatening circumstances such as Ps 32:6, in which שטף is accompanied by adjective and prepositions “great waters upon him” suggesting an overflow and in Ps 69:3, 16 [Eng. 69:2, 15] this term is paralleled with שִׁבְלָה “flood, channel.” The reference to Moses striking the rock and water flowing out employs שטף, but suggests the normal flowing of water with the use of וַיִּזְבְּזוּ “they [the waters] flowed” (Ps 78:20). Similarly, in Chronicles the term does not imply a flood but rather the normal flow of the stream (2 Chr 32:4). In Ps 124:4, the usage of שטף indicates paralleled with verb “to pass through, over” (עָבַר) indicating

it was predominantly used in depictions of destruction brought about by an overwhelming intense force moving outside its usual parameters in the same way that flooding waters destroy land. While scholars have noted the uniquely positive employment of this metaphor in Isaiah 66,³ the integrative means by which this metaphor drew upon and contributed to the established set of Isaianic memories associated with the concept of flooding water with the use of שטף is the focus of the present study.

In his commentary on Isaiah 56–66, Joseph Blenkinsopp states regarding the use of שטף in Isa 66:12,

Elsewhere in Isaiah, water flowing in full spate (שטף) is a threatening image rather than a metaphor for abundant well-being. In general, the mere re-occurrence of a word or phrase does not by itself constitute a case of conscious and deliberate modeling, or much less, of intertextuality, especially when the contexts in which the words or expressions occur are quite different.

The conclusion by Blenkinsopp stands in tension with itself. Blenkinsopp acknowledges a static employment of this term in the rest of Isaiah, but then negates the idea that “intertextuality” is involved in the employment of the metaphor in Isa 66:12.⁴ Shared knowledge gained by repeatedly reading a text as a community would have contributed to the integration of divergent texts and usages into an associative network of meaning related to repeatedly encountered ideas, such as an overwhelming river. The distinctive employment of שטף to depict an overwhelming blessing, thus, would have actually served to engage an ancient reader of Isaiah more effectively because of its contrastive or distinctive character that is brought alongside the previously negative

the overwhelming character of the water. Job 38:25 uses שטף when describing the annual flooding of rivers within a description of Yahweh’s control over nature. Proverbs uses this term metaphorically to describe anger in Prov 27:4 and implies the resulting negative actions that overflow from anger in parallel with אֶקְרִייתַת חֶמֶד. A large amount of water that threatens to overwhelm is implied in the usage in Song 8:7. The occurrences in Daniel fit the pattern of describing both the physical flood (Dan 9:26) as well as the metaphorical usage describing military invasion (Dan 11:10, 22, 26, 40). There are also occurrences in which שטף is used to describe the action of rinsing or cleaning by the pouring of water (see Lev 6:21[Eng. 6:28]; 15:11, 12; 1 Kgs 22:38; Ezek 16:9; eroding with water in Job 14:19). An interesting verse that also employs the metaphor of an overwhelming river approaching Jerusalem is used in Isa 59:19. In this verse the text describes YHWH approaching Jerusalem like a river in the context of impending judgment against his enemies in Jerusalem, but does not use שטף but צָר כְּנָהָר, a powerfully contracted or narrowly constricted river.

3 See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 306.

4 *Ibid.*, 60–66. Cf. Isa 48:18.

employment in the rest of Isaiah. Even though Blenkinsopp does not emphasize this integration of diverse employment of שֶׁטַח in Isa 66:12, he does note that the distinctive historical contexts in which different parts of Isaiah were written reveal a textual dependency between Isaiah 40–55 and Isaiah 56–66:

We have seen that in 56–66 individual texts from 40–55 have been given a future, a new lease on life, by being taken over, expanded, adapted to the needs of a later generation of listeners and readers. Since this did not happen sporadically, the view presupposes an exegetical tradition and therefore the existence of bearers of the tradition, tridents for whom 40–55, or the core of the Deutero-Isaianic corpus, possessed permanent authority and contemporaneous validity and relevance.⁵

The “permanent authority” of Deutero-Isaiah, as being foundational for the post-exilic context in which Isaiah 56–66 was written, demonstrates the amalgamative character of shared knowledge of the book of Isaiah.

Blenkinsopp also indicates that there are shared themes that are found throughout the entire book of Isaiah stating “in terms of the great, general themes—the destiny of Jerusalem, the reality of judgment and salvation, the character of the God of Israel—all sections of the book have much common.”⁶ The evidence of shared themes found throughout the book of Isaiah—a book that was written by different authors over a long span of time—demonstrates that a shared preference for focusing upon certain ideas over others continued by subsequent communities who read and read texts that later became the book of Isaiah. While there is continuity in these themes, those passages that are distinctive, or not frequently found in the book of Isaiah, still contributed to the nexus of shared knowledge and these texts would also have been imported into the reading of Isaiah. In order to address the integrative character of the use of the metaphor of the overflowing river in Isa 66:12 for the community of ancient readers in Yehud, the present study will instead start from the point at which all sections of Isaiah were read together.⁷ From this premise, occurrences of שֶׁטַח in the book of Isaiah will be explored to understand how the collective use of this term would have contributed to the mental structures that linked associated information. Starting from an ancient reader-centered per-

5 Ibid., 64.

6 Ibid., 35.

7 With regard to Isaiah 1–39, Blenkinsopp remarks that so-called Proto-Isaiah has “no comparable relationship” to Isaiah 40–66 in terms of the main themes and their treatment and that, “there are relatively few sayings in 56–66 that betray familiarity with sayings in 1–39.” (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 56–66, 34–35).

spective, the use of *נשף* in Isa 66:12 contributed to the larger network of established memories that were formed and developed as ancient communities continued to read the same text. By looking at the other occurrences of *נשף* in Isaiah, it's distinctiveness in Isa 66:12 takes on a contrastively significant mnemonic role that built upon, but also served to shift, previously established memories related to an overwhelming stream.

From the perspective of a readership in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud, who possessed the entire book of Isaiah in a form more or less similar to the one we now have, the meaning of *נשף* would have been influenced by the act of reading the book associated with Isaiah as a literary unit. Cognitive study on the associative character of memory suggests that the act of reading or hearing activates chains of related knowledge stored in memory and brings them into comparative proximity with the information being encountered.⁸ In the case of the present example of *נשף* in the book of Isaiah, these mnemonic patterns of association related to the idea and/or experience of *נשף* would have functioned as part of the background knowledge, which would have been evoked for those who also read the text leading up to Isaiah 66. Thus, a uniquely positive employment of the metaphor of an overflowing river in Isa 66:12 drew its poignancy from its inversion of the established negative memories of other usages of this term in Isaiah. By building upon the associations of *נשף* in the rest of Isaiah, the mnemonic impact of this term in Isa 66:12 was intensified by its contrastive aspect. From the point of view Late Persian/Early Hellenistic readers in Yehud, the distinctiveness of the overflowing stream of wealth in Isa 66:12 would not have been understood cognitively in isolation, but would have actively engaged and contributed to the collective concept of the overflowing stream in the worldview of the community reading Isaiah.

8 See Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, *Social Cognition: From Brains to Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), esp. 75–92; Wolfgang Klimesch, *The Structure of Long-term Memory: A Connectivity Model of Semantic Processing* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), esp. 43–50; Roger W. Schvaneveldt, "Coding Processes: Organization of Memory," in *Learning and Memory* (ed. John H. Byrne; New York: Macmillan, 2004), 82–84. See also Alan Baddley, *Essentials of Human Memory* (Hove, UK: Psychology Press, 1999), esp. 193–96; Johannes Engelkamp and Hubert D. Zimmer, *The Human Memory: A Multi-Modal Approach* (Seattle: Hogrefe & Huber, 1994); Rainer H. Kluwe, Gerd Lüer, and Frank Rosler, eds., *Principles of Learning and Memory* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2003).

1. שֹׁטֵף in the Book of Isaiah

To understand the complexity of the overflowing river metaphor and connotative impact of שֹׁטֵף in Isa 66:12, it is necessary to explore the other eight places in the book of Isaiah that this term is found.⁹ While the noun form שֹׁטֵף, occurs elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁰ in the book of Isaiah it only occurs as a verb and is most frequently employed as an attributive participle.¹¹ In Isa 10:22 שֹׁטֵף modifies כְּלִיֹּן meaning “annihilation” or “failing.”¹² The participial usage is found in Isa 28:2 where כְּגֵרִים מִיָּם כְּבִירִים (שֹׁטֵף) modifies מִיָּם in a description of a heavy rainstorm within the context of a depiction of the divine judgment being sent against Ephraim. Isa 28:15 and Isa 28:18 use the participle of שֹׁטֵף to depict a scourge-type disaster (שֹׁט) within the context of a passage about judgment against Jerusalem’s leaders,¹³ in which the people sought to avoid by making a covenant with death and Sheol.¹⁴ The occurrences of שֹׁטֵף in Isa 28:15 and 28:18, both use the phrase שֹׁטֵף שֹׁטֵף כִּי emphasizing the expansive movement of the overflowing destruction.¹⁵ Within Isa 30:28, שֹׁטֵף modifies “stream” (נָחַל) in the description of the breath of Yahweh, which destructively spreads out against the nations like an overflowing stream flowing up to the neck (רוּחוֹ כְּנָחַל שֹׁטֵף). Finally, in Isa 66:12 the attributive participle שֹׁטֵף describes the stream (נָחַל) as a part of the metaphorical depiction of Yahweh stretch-

9 Within the Hebrew Bible, forms of the root *štp* occurs thirty-seven times (see n. 2) with the greatest density of occurrences found in the book of Isaiah (Isa 8:8; 10:22; 28:2, 15, 17, 18; 30:28; 43:2; 66:12).

10 See Nah 1:8; Ps 32:6; Job 38:25; Prov 27:4; Dan 9:26; 11:22.

11 Isa 10:22; 28:2, 15, 18; 30:28; 66:12

12 The only other occurrence of כְּלִיֹּן is found in the list of curses in Deut 28:65.

13 Following the qere in Isa 28:15. 1QIsa^a has שֹׁט instead of MT כֵּשׁ. Cf usage of שֹׁט to describe chastisement in: 1 Kgs 12:11, 14; Isa 10:26; Job 9:23; 2 Chr 10:11, 12.

14 Kaiser notes the relationship between the concept of the underworld and the waters of death and cites Ps 124:4 (*štp*); 18:5; 69:3, 16; Job 38:16. See Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39: A Commentary* (trans. R.A. Wilson from *Der Prophet Jesaja / Kap. 13–39* [1973]; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 251. Childs suggests that the pact with Sheol may represent allegiance to Egyptian chthonian gods. See B. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 208. Blenkinsopp notes the role of the Ugaritic god Mot in this passage (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 393). Of the references noted by Kaiser, three employ *štp* (Ps 69:3, 16; 124:4) suggesting another association of this term with the unstoppable aspect of mortality. Blenkinsopp suggests a relationship between the term and the personification of the storm god Hadad-Baal who was the enemy of Mot and was presented as horned and carrying a thunderbolt or a whip (the literal meaning of שֹׁט). See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 394.

15 Following the qere in Isa 28:15 with the ketiv in the MT being כִּי־שֹׁטֵף.

ing out peace and the glory of the nations to Zion (נְטֵה-אֵלֶיהָ כְּנָהָר שְׁלום) (וּבְנַחֵל שׁוֹטֵף כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם).

The remaining three occurrences of שֹׁטֵף in the book of Isaiah are all verbal forms whose subjects are types of moving water.¹⁶ Isa 8:8 uses שֹׁטֵף with עָבַר to describe the approach of the “mighty and great river” of Assyria (Isa 8:7). The occurrence of יִשְׁטְפוּ מַיִם in Isa 28:17b^β is employed alongside נָעָה, “to sweep away” (Isa 28:17b^α), suggesting that a type of flowing water that was intensely moving in a destructive way.¹⁷ The association of שֹׁטֵף with threatening and extremely forceful moving water is also found in Isa 43:2a, “When you pass through the waters I am with you, or through rivers, *they will not overwhelm you* (רָא יִשְׁטְפוּךָ).”

In addition to the pattern of grammatical usage of שֹׁטֵף in Isaiah, there is also evidence of connotative continuity, which would have shaped which associative concepts would have likely been evoked when שֹׁטֵף was read. In Isa 8:7–8, for example, the term metaphorically describes the Assyrian army that would invade Judah:

8:7 So look, the sovereign master is bringing up against them the turbulent and mighty waters of the great and mighty river—the king of Assyria and all his glory.¹⁸ It will come up over all its channels and go over all its banks. 8:8 It will spill into Judah, it will overflow (שֹׁטֵף) and pass through (עָבַר); it will reach even to the neck (עַד-צִוְאָר). He will spread his wings out over your entire land, O Immanuel.”

In Isa 8:7–8, שֹׁטֵף associates an overwhelming number of invading foreign troops with the character of a stream that overruns its normal course to bring water to areas outside its typical channel in a manner that creates an imminent threat.¹⁹ Six of the occurrences of שֹׁטֵף (Isa 10:22; Isaiah 28) also evoke associations with an overwhelming destruc-

16 Isa 8:8; 28:17; Isa 43:2.

17 See, for example the usage of the term Lev 6:21[Eng. 6:28]; 15:11, 12; 1 Kgs 22:38; Ezek 16:9; Job 14:19; 2 Chr 32:4.

18 Term for the strength and military resources of the king of Assyria in Isa 8:7 is literally “all his glory” (וְאֵת-כָּל-כְּבוֹדוֹ), which is the same term used in Isa 66:12 to describe what the nations are bringing to Zion. The use of a shared metaphor and language between these two passages creates another associative link that may have contributed to the reversal of fortune that is found in Isa 66:12.

19 Jer 47:2 employs this metaphor (אֶרֶץ וְיִשְׁטְפוּ שׁוֹטֵף לְנַחֵל וְהָיָה) similarly by representing an invading foreign army that would destroy the Philistines. As with Isa 8:8 this “overwhelming river” of invasion is divinely directed (Jer 47:6–7). Cf occurrence of *štp* in Dan 11:10, 22, 26, 40. In the metaphorical usage of the verb in the Hebrew Bible in which *štp* is used in parallel with עָבַר, it often represents an invading army (Isa 8:8; poss. Isa 28:15, 17; Nah 1:8; Dan 11:10, 40).

tion, but with Yahweh himself as the force behind the impending devastation.

Isa 10:22

For though your people Israel were as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return: *a destruction is determined, overflowing with vindication* (כְּלִיּוֹן חַרוֹץ שׁוֹטֵף צִדְקָה:).

Isa 28:2

Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one; like a hailstorm, a destroying storm, *as a downpour of mighty waters overflowing* (כְּיָרֵם מַיִם כְּבִירִים שֹׁטְפִים), will he cast down to the earth with violence.

Isa 28:15

Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol are we at agreement; *when the overflowing scourge shall pass through* (שׁוֹטֵף שׁוֹטֵף כִּי־יַעֲבֹר),²⁰ *it shall not come unto us*; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

Isa 28:17–18

¹⁷ And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, *and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place* (וְשֹׁטֵף מַיִם יִשְׁטְפוּ:).¹⁸ And your covenant with death shall be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand; *when the overflowing scourge shall pass through* (שׁוֹטֵף שׁוֹטֵף כִּי־יַעֲבֹר), then you shall be trodden down by it.

In the above verses the employment of שֹׁטֵף repeatedly describes an impending physical danger through a metaphorical comparison with the destructive force overflowing water, whether through torrential rain or a flooding river. As in the case of Yahweh's agency in Isa 8:7–8, these occurrences in Isaiah 10 and Isaiah 28 reassert the mental connections of ancient readers who repeatedly encountered the term שֹׁטֵף in Isaiah with certain set of overlapping conceptual and metaphorical fields of stored knowledge. One of the most emphasized conceptual fields that became connected through the term שֹׁטֵף in the book of Isaiah relates the overflowing stream to the character of divine judgment, which is found in almost every passage that employs שֹׁטֵף in Isaiah.²¹ In addition to this frequent association, further mnemonic connections with שֹׁטֵף were likely reinforced and informed by the physical reality of

20 Following the qere. See note 13.

21 The "transgression of Jacob" in Isa 10:20 and covenant makers in Isaiah 28 would have evoked many other concepts related to covenantal faithfulness within a worldview shaped by reading the Torah and Former Prophets in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud.

life in Yehud, which depended upon the expected cycle of rain and flooding. Ancient readers and the community would have had first-hand experience of the character and threatening strength of annually flooding rivers—both as the necessary source of life as well as a destructive deadly force that could end life. Thus, environmental experience of overwhelming water in Yehud would have provided a poignant image to create a mnemonic association between שטף and the dual-potentiality of Yahweh's deliverance or judgment.²²

In the case of Isaiah, the occurrence of שטף in Isa 66:12 is the only occurrence that associated the metaphor with an approaching benefit. All other occurrences of שטף, leading up to Isaiah 66 contributed to an association of שטף with intense and overwhelming destruction as divine judgment.²³ The conclusion that there was an associative preference of שטף with total destruction is also supported by the absence of this term in being used within presentations of flooding waters that emphasized deliverance, rather than destruction. Such is the case with the reference to Noah in Isa 54:9, which does not use שטף.

For this is as the waters of Noah (מִי נֹחַ) unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah (מִי נֹחַ) shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will no longer be angry with you, nor rebuke you.

The absence of the term שטף here in Isa 54:9 could be seen as supporting the established association of שטף with destructive forces that annihilated life throughout the majority of occurrences in the books of Isaiah. The lack of this term in this description of flooding waters that were promised never to be repeated would also have functioned in tension with the strong emphasis throughout Isaiah's usage of שטף as describing an imminent threat, which has not yet occurred. In addition to this, the memory of Noah is centered on the deliverance of Noah from the waters. Whereas the term שטף in Isaiah is most frequently found in the description of total destruction, its absence in a passage related to a *past* divine *deliverance* from destructive waters in Isa 54:9, is consistent with the mnemonic preference for associating שטף with a future divine annihilating judgment. The usage of מִי נֹחַ here—instead of שטף—in the refer-

22 For discussion on the evidence of cycles of rainfall and resulting annual changes in river levels in Judah, see Arie S. Issar *Water Shall Flow from the Rock: Hydrogeology and Climate in the Lands of the Bible* (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1990), esp. 125–40.

23 An example of the intensity of the sort of destruction represented in these cases can be seen in the references in Isaiah 10. After the description of the overwhelming vindication in Isa 10:22, Isa 10:23 states, “For a full end, and that determined (וְהַסְרֵצָה כִּלְהָ כִי), will the Lord of Hosts make in the midst of all the earth.”

ence to the flooding waters in Isa 54:9, in which Noah and his family were saved, supports the conclusion that the mnemonic character of the term was more frequently linked to memories involving total destruction in all occurrences of the term except Isa 66:12.

This mnemonic preference is also evidenced in Isa 30:27–28, where the term שֹׁטֵף figuratively describes the breath of a wrathful Yahweh as he carries out judgment against the nations:

Isa 30:27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes from far, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is as a devouring fire; 28. *and his breath is as an overflowing stream that reaches up to the neck* (וְרוּחוֹ כְנַחַל שׁוֹטֵף עַד-צְוֹאֵר), to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction: and a bridle that causes them to err shall be in the jaws of the peoples.

Again, in Isa 30:28 the motif of divine agency in overwhelmingly destructive action is described with the metaphor of an overflowing river.²⁴ Recurring emphasis upon the extreme nature of the wrath is highlighted in the accompanying phrase “up to the neck” (עַד-צְוֹאֵר), which occurs in Isa 30:28 and also in Isa 8:8.

The occurrence of שֹׁטֵף in Isaiah 30 would have evoked another association with the usage in Isaiah 66. There are several motifs that are shared between these two passages including the presentation of Yahweh as וְכַנַּחַל שׁוֹטֵף as approaching Jerusalem to deliver his people, as well as sovereignty of YHWH over the nations. The objects of the imminent destruction in the metaphor of Isa 30:28 are the Assyrians, whereas Zion is the object of the imminent restoration through the foreigners in Isa 66:12. However, the larger context in both of these passages is the salvation of Jerusalem. The overlap of the phrase וְכַנַּחַל שׁוֹטֵף in Isa 30:28, which is a passage that predicts the salvation and restoration of Jerusalem, would likely have been part of nexus of associated networks of shared memories evoked when reading Isa 66:12 in Later Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud.²⁵ The elements of judgment using שֹׁטֵף

24 The outflowing impact of divine breath, word, speech found throughout Isaiah 30 fits within the association of causal relationship between the outflowing of water in an overflowing river and the annual cycle of rains—water is the same source that has the potential to save or destroy. In this reference, the expected result of rejecting the word of YHWH (Isa 30:12) is the overflowing of divine breath that represents the source of punishment.

25 Sommer argues that the author of Isaiah 40–66 composed Isa 66:12–24 to be a reproduction of Isa 30:27–33. See Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 246. See also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 423.

in Isaiah are also influenced the contextual emphases of the passages within which שָׁטַח was read. In this way, the context of salvation for Jerusalem in Isaiah 30, likely also served to contribute to a shift the dominant associative preference towards a more positive connotation.²⁶ Even though the usage of שָׁטַח in its immediate context of Isa 30:28 relates to divine judgment, the association of this passage as part of the larger unit focused upon divine deliverance through divine judgment upon foreign enemies could have evoked indirect positive associations of שָׁטַח with concepts of deliverance through destructive judgment of one's enemies.²⁷

The next occurrence of שָׁטַח in Isaiah is found in Isa 43:2, which evokes similar conceptual fields related to water as a metaphor for a physical threat or impending danger. However, within this verse, the association of the overwhelming water with divine punishment shifts from the previous occurrences of שָׁטַח to an association of Yahweh as the protector *from* the overwhelming water:

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you (וּבְנְהָרוֹת לֹא יִשְׁטְפוּךָ); when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you.

The expectation of the threatening danger of overflowing waters within Isaianic discourse is still employed in Isa 43:2 and evoke the expected set of associations of שָׁטַח as a metaphor for an impending threat, but Isa 43:2 also contributes a minor, but distinctive aspect into the nexus of associations that link flooding waters divine punishment. In this case,

26 The retelling of the story from Num 20:1–13 in Ps 78:17–21 is an additional example of a positive employment of *štp* in the description of the overflowing rivers (וּנְהָלִים יִשְׁטְפוּ) caused to come forth from the rock by YHWH in Ps 78:20.

27 Childs suggests in his discussion related to the divergent themes in Isa 30:27–33 that the latest authors of Isaiah employed a sort of integrative discourse that presented together the dialectical tensions of salvation and judgment:

The form-critical problem at stake is that elsewhere on the level of primary Isaianic tradition the literary forms of the threat and promise are not combined in this manner. Moreover, rather than suggesting that the entire oracle is a postexilic construct, a more persuasive interpretation would be to recognize elements of ancient, theophanic tradition that depict Yahweh's coming judgment of Assyria. At some later date—possibly postexilic—in response to the cumulative effect of God's promise as the ultimate goal of the divine plan for Israel, an explicit word of this promise was joined to the dominant note of threat against the nations. The result is that this later stage of canonical shaping, the two elements of judgment and salvation in First Isaiah that most frequently were simply juxtaposed have been fused into an integral whole as part of one divine purpose. (Childs, *Isaiah*, 227–28)

Yahweh is the defender from the external threat of destruction, rather than force behind it.

The last occurrence of שֶׁטַח in the book of Isaiah is found in Isa 66:12a, in which the overflowing stream is a metaphor describing the incoming of foreign wealth in a future divinely-directed restoration of Zion,

Isa 66:12

For thus says the LORD, Behold, *I will extend peace to her like a river and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream and you shall suckle* (נָשָׂה־אֶלֶיָּהּ כְּנָהָר (שְׁלוֹם וְכִנְהָל שֶׁטַח כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם וַיִּנְקְחֶם); you will be carried upon the side, and shall dandled upon the knees.

The unique utilization of שֶׁטַח in Isa 66:12 relates to an inversion of the divine action that causes prosperity and peace to come to Jerusalem instead of the expected devastation and destruction.²⁸ In relation to the syntactical and semantic employment of שֶׁטַח elsewhere in Isaiah, the usage in Isa 66:12 re-affirms several of the established aspects of associations with the term that were shaped and reshaped as the community in Yehud read and reread the book of Isaiah. These connected conceptual fields would have been consistently evoked for these ancient readers as they read Isa 66:12. The following associative aspects, which have been discussed here as examples of the use of the term שֶׁטַח in the book of Isaiah, are:

1. divine agency
2. the environmental relationship between rain and rivers
3. intense and continuous movement of powerful force
4. the transgression of usual parameters or boundaries
5. overwhelming and expansive size and volume
6. imminent destruction

While many of the occurrences of שֶׁטַח in Isaiah present evidence of associations with all of these conceptual fields, it is important to note how the seemingly distinctive, and uniquely positive, employment in Isa 66:12 still shares four of these associated motifs. The only aspect that is not present in Isa 66:12 is the motif of imminent destruction. The result of range of shared associations between שֶׁטַח in the book of Isaiah as compared to Isa 66:12 suggests that readers would have interpreted

28 While the phrase שְׁלוֹם כְּנָהָר in Isa 66:12a may also have evoked the river metaphor in Isa 48:18, the letteral overlap between these verses is not extensive. Isa 59:19, also presents an image of Yahweh approaching Jerusalem like a river in the context of impending judgment against his enemies in Jerusalem, but does not employ *štp* and instead describes the waters in terms of a narrowly constricted river (צָר כְּנָהָר).

the meaning of *ḥṣ* in Isa 66:12 as being contiguous with much of the of established cluster of associated images, but significantly distinctive in perhaps the most important aspect. While the expected associations of *ḥṣ* with divine agency of flooding rivers and metaphorically as descriptive of powerful forces that can overflow and expand, the element of destruction, which is emphasized in the rest of Isaiah, is replaced with the aspect of a flood of blessing—the source of death becomes the source of life in Isa 66:12.

For readers in Late Persian Yehud, the discursively recognizable use of *ḥṣ* in Isa 66:12 was engaging and compelling because the strong overlap with the established set of associations of the term elsewhere in the book of Isaiah. It was from this shared starting point of background knowledge—shaped through the act of repeatedly making similar associations in the act of reading and rereading together—that any divergent or distinctive information could have been integrated coherently into the worldview of ancient readers. Many of the expected associations were activated and reinforced when reading Isa 66:12, with the singularly altered characteristic giving the metaphor a compelling twist. The effectiveness of the partial overlap with the established connotative range would have brought to mind other passages with *ḥṣ* that depicted intense force and velocity. These characteristics contributed to the interpretation of extreme character of the movement in Isa 66:12. In this way, reading the associations with *ḥṣ* in the book of Isaiah as a whole would have strengthened the established networks of linked knowledge while at the same time inverting, or shifting, only one aspect with the result of contrastively emphasizing the intensity and proportions of Zion's restoration in Isaiah 66.

The effectiveness of this method of contrastive employment fits within what cognitive studies has identified as the “inconsistency advantage” of human perception and the mental organization of knowledge in memory. In this process:

...evaluatively inconsistent behaviors are considered thoughtfully in comparison to other behaviors. This consideration strengthens links between inconsistent behavior and the remaining behaviors (compared to the links between each evaluatively consistent or neutral behavior and the remaining behaviors). The inconsistency advantage presumably occurs as people think about the inconsistencies, relating them to each other and to the consistent behaviors, creating associative links among them.²⁹

29 Fiske and Taylor, 82. For more on this concept from a literary perspective of the relationship between the integration of background knowledge in the act of

According to this principle, the distinctiveness of a non-destructive overflowing stream would have had the advantage of engaging a reader who would have been led to contemplate the difference between the different information and the larger network of associations established from reading the other occurrences in the book of Isaiah. The inconsistency advantage also supports the process of cognitive association between similar and dissimilar information into larger mental networks, as well as the conclusions that any distinctive information would have been didactically important for re-evaluating the established interpretive frameworks of meaning. The integrative aspect of cognitive processing of diverse information points to the rhetorical effectiveness of blending of old and new information. The innovative integration of divergent metaphors in the book of Isaiah is noted by Marc Brettler who concludes,

Isaiah 40–66, through working and reworking of metaphors created a new God, who differs substantially from other biblical depictions of the deity. His ability to do so verifies that successful metaphors create something new; they have the ‘power to create a reality rather than simply to give us a way of conceptualizing a pre-existing reality.’ [M]etaphor can provide a rational bridge from the known to the radically unknown, from a given context of understanding to a changed context of understanding. Perhaps this is the ultimate meaning of that prophet’s words (43:19) “Look-I am creating something new.”³⁰

For the community in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud, to imagine the overflowing stream of 66:12 meant to imagine the divinely directed destructive waters elsewhere in Isaiah being transformed into overflowing waters of benevolence. The use of *שׁוּב* within the passage describing the restoration of Zion involved a reversal of fortunes that would have evoked the same intensity as that of the destruction. Burkard Zapff writes regarding this metaphor in Isa 66:12, “Die Metapher beinhaltet demnach den Aspekt des Unwiderstehlichen und Unaufhalt-samen des künftigen Heils,” or “The metaphor thus includes the aspect of the irresistible and unstoppable future of salvation.”³¹ The innovative use of *שׁוּב* in Isa 66:12 is one example of the employment of older metaphors towards a different trajectory. As Whybray writes in his com-

reading information and memory see Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns in Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 274–94. See also Nicolae Babuts *Memory, Metaphors, and Meaning: Reading Literary Texts* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2009), esp. 1–45.

30 Brettler, “Incompatible Metaphors for Yhwh in Isaiah 40–66,” *JSOT* 78 (1998): 120.

31 Zapff, *Jesaja* 56–66, 436.

mentary, “The present author has given it [the phrase כְּבוֹד שׁוֹטֵף] a radical re-interpretation, turning it from an expression of wrath into one of blessing.”

2. Foreigners Coming to Jerusalem in Isa 66:12 and in the Book of Isaiah

The association of שֹׁטֵף with an unstoppable force, which predominantly destroys in the usage of the term in Isaiah, functioned in Isa 66:12 as a description of the “glory (or wealth) of the nations” (כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם) that Yahweh was causing to be brought into Zion. The movement of nations into Jerusalem as described in Isa 66:12 would have evoked several other texts in Isaiah that involved both invasion and tributary procession.

A few examples of such passages would likely have included the description the influx of foreign wealth in Isaiah 2:2b that likens the migration of foreigners into Jerusalem to movement of flowing water (וַיָּהֲרוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם).³² The context of Isaiah 2, which is a description of the future restoration of Jerusalem, would have also reinforced an eschatological association between the metaphorical associations with flowing water and a migration of foreign nations to the temple. Isaiah 2, thus, also shares a temporal orientation with Isaiah 66. Another example of this set of motifs is found throughout Isaiah 60, which also describes a future restoration of Jerusalem. Especially interesting in relation to the role of nations as providing and bringing wealth to Jerusalem include references to the nations in Isa 60:5b, “the wealth/ strength of the nations will come to you [Zion]” (חֵיל גּוֹיִם יָבֹא לָךְ). Isa 60:6–9 list the various migrations of wealth including gold and silver brought to Zion from the surrounding and distant areas. The description of the movement of the wealth of Lebanon into Zion in Isa 60:13 “the glory of Lebanon will come to you” (כְּבוֹד הַלְבָּנוֹן אֵלֶיךָ יָבֹא) is similar to the language that describes the migration of foreign wealth in Isa 66:12.

When reading Isa 66:12, memories gained from reading other passages related to the migration of foreigners to Jerusalem throughout the book of Isaiah would have also likely evoked Rezin and Pekah’s invasion of Judah and siege against Jerusalem in Isaiah 7, Sennacherib’s

32 For other examples of passages the present the migration of foreign wealth into Jerusalem or the migration of foreigners against Jerusalem for invasion see Isa 18:7; 29:7–8; 55:5; 60:3, 5, 11, 16; 61:6; 66:18, 20.

invasion and siege in Isaiah 36–37, and the Babylonian envoy to Jerusalem afterwards in Isa 39:1–3. While these texts describe the actual and impending invasion of foreigners *against* Jerusalem, the shared motif of foreigners coming to Jerusalem likely was also activated mnemonic networks of related background knowledge, which therefore also shaped the meaning of Isa 66:12 when it was read. Conversely, after reading Isa 66:12, the positive employment of the overflowing stream metaphor would have also contributed further to strengthening memories of other passages in Isaiah related to divine deliverances from the Assyrians,³³ and the return of the exiles from Babylon through Cyrus (Isa 44:28; 45:1).

Other mnemonic associations important for the interpretation of Isa 66:12 would have been gained through the physical experiences of water in Yehud, in which winter rains annually swelled rivers as collected runoff come down from the surrounding Judean hillsides. Hydrogeologist Arie Issar remarks regarding the movement of water in the Jordan river system:

The Jordan leaves the Sea of Galilee at its southern end where it is joined by the Yarmuk river, which drains the heights of Golan and Gilead. This river carries mainly floodwaters. Its flow is high during the winter but low during the summer....From there southward, the Jordan meanders through the marly Lisan layers, receiving spring floodwater from the west and east ephemeral wadis, such as the Jabbock, which flow during the winter and dry up in summer. Thus the flow of the Jordan river, south of the Sea of Galilee is very much affected by the floods of the Yarmuk and the other ephemeral springs. In winter it is a gushing river, very dangerous and difficult to cross, while in summer, and especially in the autumn, the flow diminishes extensively and the river can be forded in many places.³⁴

The proximity of this system to Judah suggest that physical experience of these annual changes in river and groundwater levels would have been part of the shared knowledge of the community in Late Persian Yehud. This first-hand knowledge also significantly contributed the shared associations and interpretations of the term שֶׁפָּרַח as it was read in the book of Isaiah.

To the south of Yehud, in the northern Negev, which was part of Idumea in the Achaemenid period, a very arid climate that was covered mainly by sand dunes existed. According to Issar, this area receives

33 The divine defeat of the Assyrians is found in Isa 10:12, 24–25; 11:11; 14:25; 27:13; 30:31; 31:8 and then described in the events of the Sennacherib's defeat in Isaiah 36–37.

34 Issar, *Water from the Rock*, 126.

scant and sporadic rainfall (50–100mm annually), which have the potential to create devastating floods occasionally.³⁵ Issar comments regarding the account in 2 Kings 3 that took place on the southern border of Moab and describes such an event:

Flooding in the desert valleys of the Negev and Edom without any sign of local rain storm may happen from time to time, the author being witness of such an event a couple of times. It seems quite probable that the armies got stuck in the Arava Rift Valley on their way to the southern flanks of Moab. This broad valley on the border of Edom, Moab, and Judea is extremely arid (less than 50 mm annual average precipitation) yet from time to time it is flooded by water flowing from the mountains of the Negev or Edom.³⁶

The reality of such unexpected flooding in areas neighboring Judah, fits within the associations of *שטף* in the book of Isaiah as descriptive of sudden and overwhelming danger. The discourse of overflowing water would have been grounded in the experiences of nature for the community living in Judah who associated the root *שטף* with a physical threat, but also with the influx of needed water in an semi-arid to extremely arid climate that was dependent upon annual rains and high water levels to feed into the springs and groundwater supplies for agricultural survival. The character of floods would have meant that literary associations with flooding would interrelate with the physical associations with flooding as something that was both feared and desired by this community. This discursive duality made the term *שטף* a rich metaphor for evoking associations with intense divine judgment and providence as demonstrated in the collective employment of the concept of overflowing water in Isaiah.

In conclusion, this discussion has only touched upon a few of the intertextual connections and conceptual associations evoked in the reference to the overflowing stream in Isaiah 66:12. There are certainly many more associations that would have been evoked in the reading of Isa 66:12 related to other Hebrew words and phrases for water in book of Isaiah. These would have also contributed to the image of the overflowing stream, but the usage of *שטף* in Isa 66:12 is one example of how a reader-oriented mnemonic approach can contribute to understanding the collective and complex impact of the reading of *שטף* had within a text such as the book of Isaiah that was read and reread within the same community. To read the metaphor of the overflowing stream in Isa 66:12 in isolation would be to miss out on the amalgamative impact

35 Ibid., 111.

36 Ibid., 146–47.

that was resulted from the act of reading, which activated and engaged the shared memory of this term and its mnemonic associations developed from encountering this term elsewhere in Isaiah. The distinctive use of שטף in Isa 66:12 shaped, and was shaped by, the evolution of associative preference towards an emphasis upon future-oriented restoration surrounding the overflowing stream. For this ancient community in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud, reading the book of Isaiah would have provided the semantic background for a complex associative engagement with the phrase קִנְחָל שׁוֹטֵף in Isa 66:12 as it brought this verse into mental proximity with many other Isaianic texts. The collective impact of the utilization of שטף in Isa 66:12 to describe the intensity and massive movement of the wealth of the nations would have activated several related associations—literary and environmental—thereby contributing to the conceptually rich and complex mindscape of this community.

“But into the Water You Must Not Dip It” (Jeremiah 13:1) – Methodological Reflections on How to Identify the Work of the Deuteronomistic Redaction in the Book of Jeremiah

HERMANN-JOSEF STIPP

1. A Word on Redaction Criticism

The book of Jeremiah has been the subject of intense redaction-critical scrutiny, especially since Bernhard Duhm's ground-breaking commentary from the beginning of the 20th century.¹ This is unsurprising, given the wide scale of genres and diverging theological outlooks sitting side by side in this book. In addition, the Septuagint represents an edition considerably shorter than the canonical Masoretic text. Moreover, in chapter 36, the book itself offers a narrative that implies that the current version evolved throughout successive stages of completion. So, for a long time, an increasing number of scholars tended to subscribe to the view that this prophetic book arose from an extended history of growth which can be recovered to a certain degree by redaction criticism.

But for quite a while now, redaction criticism has been given a bad name in certain quarters of our discipline. Many biblical scholars, while not denying the composite nature of most of our biblical books, seem to consider diachronic agnosticism a token of a superior level of methodological awareness. Redaction-critical studies are written off as being based on too flimsy evidence, and producing an ever-mounting number of mutually exclusive theories that are unable to garner widespread support, which is why the approach should better be abandoned altogether. However, as far as the book of Jeremiah is concerned, it is interesting to note that a defense of redaction criticism has recently seen the

1 Bernhard Duhm, *Jeremia* (KHC; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1901). The present study was prepared during a visit to the Department of Ancient Studies and the Theological Faculty of the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) in March/April 2012. I would like to express my gratitude to Juliane Eckstein and Ellen Sabo for improving my English.

light of day in a rather unlikely place, namely, in a collection of papers explicitly devoted to post-modern readings of the book.² Taking a cue from “ideological criticism, rhetorical criticism, and postcolonial theory” Carolyn J. Sharp undertakes to “gesture toward a reconfigured notion of redaction criticism that responds to absence, erasure, and rewriting in Jeremiah.”³ The aim of such an enterprise is “to take account of the irresolvable dynamics of foreignness that animate redacted biblical texts such as Jeremiah.”⁴ Therefore, redaction criticism is not a line of research that scholars are free to disregard at whim; on the contrary, it “is essential [...] for persuasive negotiation of the multiple moments of interrogation and ‘resistant traces’ that shape the book of Jeremiah.”⁵ Ultimately, following Sharp, redaction criticism is a necessary requirement for complying with the demands of “hermeneutical ethics,” because it prevents contemporary interpreters from being “complicit in dynamics of marginalization.”⁶ What used to be dismissed as a baseless intellectual gamble is suddenly championed as a pressing moral duty.

It is fascinating to see how Sharp’s plea is taken up by A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman in their introductory summary of the essays in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed*.⁷ In their initial “assessment of the current guild,” they echo the usual prejudice against redaction-critical efforts. On pages 3 to 4, they gaze deeply into the poor traumatized soul of the historical-critical scholar:

In the encounter with the scroll of Jeremiah, the guild has been traumatized by inconcinnity. To manage such textual trauma recourse was taken to historicist tools focused on textual genetics rather than poetics. Schooled in the assumptions of modernity, the guild has sought to overcome the scroll by abandoning it. And thus in the process created a reader who must either create a biographical figure around whom to rehabilitate coherence for the disparate traditions or create a compositional biography which renders inconcinnity invisible by reading serialized Jeremiahs prior to the congealed scroll in its traumatizing form.

2 A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman, eds., *Jeremiah (Dis)placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah* (LHBOTS 529; London: T & T Clark, 2011).

3 Carolyn Sharp, “Jeremiah in the Land of Aporia: Reconfiguring Redaction Criticism as Witness to Foreignness,” in *Jeremiah (Dis)Placed: New Directions in Writing/Reading Jeremiah* (ed. A. R. Pete Diamond and Louis Stulman; LHBOTS 529; London: T & T Clark, 2011), 35–46 (37 n. 6).

4 Sharp, “Jeremiah in the Land of Aporia,” 36.

5 Ibid.

6 Sharp, “Jeremiah in the Land of Aporia,” 45.

7 Diamond and Stulman, “Analytical Introduction.”

In doing so, historicist methods have created a type of reader ill equipped to handle aberrant textuality – that is, one alien to modernity's aesthetic imagination. The scroll has become an open wound that wounds in return.

Rather than rigorously interrogate the adequacy of its aesthetic imagination, the guild, all too often, continues production of increasingly complex and intricate compositional hypotheses often lacking methodological common sense and theoretical clarity.

A reader emerges incapable of imagining ideological complexity and artistic cunning. Instead, this reader atomizes the scroll, dissolves it in the search for procrustean coherence. The resulting compositional portrait offers an illusion of historical precision and detail founded upon unverifiable speculation; profoundly unstable, such hypotheses are capable of multiple subjective reconfigurations based upon too many unknowns. The available data are just too thin.⁸

Two pages further on, Diamond and Stulman recapitulate Sharp's paper as follows:

Rather than abandon the Redaction Critical reader, Sharp seeks to reconstruct it via ideological criticism and rhetorical criticism through the lens of post-colonial theory. [...] She grants the Redaction Critical reader's vision of ideological diversity and conflict. Reading hidden authors and the clash of voices founded in party politics remains a central task. But then Sharp reconfigures the process of evaluating those voices by appeal to post-colonial concepts of the foreigner, of hybridity and of resistance in the face of imperial, monological domination. [...] For Sharp, the reader must honor the hybridity of the resultant redacted scroll by not privileging any one redacted voice over another. Thus emerges a type of ethically motivated reader who refuses complicity in the politics of domination and marginalization.⁹

In a collection of papers, the task of the introductory essay is not to criticize the contributors but to present an overview of what the volume offers the reader. So it is in line with common practice that Diamond and Stulman avoid commenting on Sharp's position openly. But if we were to share their judgment on diachronic theories, we would have to reject Sharp's point entirely. The available data—to borrow a phrase from Diamond and Stulman, used in the above quotation—are unlikely to have grown any thicker within the brief moment it takes to peruse those two pages. Hence, we would have to conclude that

8 Ibid., 3–4.

9 Ibid., 6.

Sharp's endeavor was doomed from the outset for its sheer lack of methodological feasibility, regardless of the ethical merits of her struggle against the "dynamics of marginalization" operative in Biblical texts. Anyway, it should be clear that the viability of an approach does not depend on the nobility (or lack of thereof) of the cause pursued by the scholar, but instead on the availability of data and criteria. Or else the problem of method would transmogrify into a mere matter of labeling: as soon as you could guise your scholarly endeavor in the garb of an august concern or a fashionable theory, you could dispense with worries about facts.

In what follows, I will discuss a methodological issue of the redaction criticism of the book of Jeremiah. In so doing, I side with Sharp in maintaining that diachronic studies in the OT are viable—to a reasonable degree of course, as with all kinds of investigations affecting our subject. On the other hand, I see no need to resort to high-flying theoretical constructs—as for instance postcolonial theory—in order to bolster my enterprise. I take the position of the autonomous reader, who identifies problems and seeks solutions appealing to his mind, while refusing to be lectured on how his imagination is somehow not up to the task, in contradistinction to other readers who confidently celebrate the superiority of their own theoretical stance. I take mere curiosity about the driving forces behind these developments as sufficient justification for trying to clarify the processes involved. In fact, even though fundamental doubts regarding the practicability of diachronic inquiry have been touted as a major step forward in critical thinking for quite a long time now, they have proved to be unable to silence the approach. Especially in the case of the book of Jeremiah this comes as no surprise, in view of the solid clues, as referred to above, that evince a history of growth. For many readers of the book—and of the whole Bible, for that matter—the facts are just too thick. Accordingly, I resist the attempts to taint that entire line of research as fruitless, and I insist on adjudicating the merits of pertinent hypotheses on an individual, case-by-case basis. As far as my own views are concerned, I do not expect, nor intend, to convince everybody, in the same way that I remain skeptical vis-à-vis many attempts to make sense of the final text. While I fully agree that explaining the ultimate result of the textual development counts among the foremost duties of exegetes, studies of the latter kind often make me wonder if scholars restricting their investigations to that area are prepared to subject their own theories to the same standards of critical doubt and of suitability for creating consensus that they demand from diachronic assumptions. Anyway, doing away with diachronic issues would imply ceasing to use the Bible for historiographic purposes.

The redaction-critical topic I want to treat, relates to the fundamental problems of how to identify contributions of the deuteronomistic redaction to the book of Jeremiah. I will use the prophet's symbolic act with the waistcloth in Jer 13:1–11 as an example. For this reason, it may be helpful to first recall some general properties of prophetic symbolic acts, as well as the corresponding reports in the Bible.

2. Prophetic Symbolic Acts

Reports of prophetic symbolic acts are particularly numerous in the book of Ezekiel, but the book of Jeremiah contains several examples too. Excerpts from chapters 27–28 offer some of the most familiar cases in point:¹⁰

27 ¹ At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from YHWH: ² YHWH said this to me, 'Make yourself thongs and yokes and put them on your neck. ³ Then send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, through their envoys accredited to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem. ⁴ Give them the following message for their masters, "YHWH Sabaoth, God of Israel, says this: You must tell your masters this: ⁵ I by my great power and outstretched arm made the earth, the human beings and the animals that are on earth, and I give them to whom I please. ⁶ For the present, I have handed all these countries over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, my servant; I have even put the wild animals at his service. ⁷ All the nations will serve him, his son and his grandson, until the time for his own country comes in its turn, when mighty nations and great kings will enslave him. ⁸ Any nation or kingdom that will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and will not bow its neck to the yoke of the king of Babylon, I shall punish that nation with sword, famine and plague, YHWH declares, until I have destroyed it by his hand."

28 ¹ In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, the prophet Hananiah son of Azur, from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, ² "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³ Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, which King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. ⁴ I will also bring back to this place King Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, says the Lord, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon."

10 Translations are taken, or adapted, from the NRSV.

¹⁰ Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, and broke it. ¹¹ And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the Lord: This is how I will break the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years." At this, the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

These passages recount a sequence of three prophetic symbolic acts. The dates given in the Masoretic text of 27:1 and 28:1 are confused. But the two chapters as a whole, as well as certain external sources of information, show clearly that the narrated events are supposed to have taken place under King Zedekiah. The quotation from chapter 27 refers to a diplomatic conference that occurred during his reign, when the ambassadors of neighboring countries convened in Jerusalem, apparently to explore the chances of a joint rebellion against Babylon. As we are told, YHWH instructed the prophet Jeremiah to approach the envoys and deliver his word about the futility of any resistance to the foreign power, for YHWH himself had bestowed universal rule on Nebuchadnezzar. To convey this message, Jeremiah was to present a stark, graphic appeal to the imagination of his audience. In the first symbolic act he was to carry a yoke, signifying the Babylonian subjugation, on his neck (27:2). This activity is the background to the ensuing report of Jeremiah's clash with Hananiah in chapter 28. In a second symbolic act, Jeremiah was to send yokes to the visiting diplomats and explain to them the meaning of this odd deed (27:3–11). The third symbolic act is performed by Jeremiah's prophetic opponent Hananiah, who take the yoke from Jeremiah's shoulders and break it, "saying, 'Thus says the Lord: This is how I will break the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years.'"

These examples may suffice as the basis for two general remarks on prophetic symbolic acts. First, since Georg Fohrer's classic study on the subject was published,¹¹ it has been well-known that reports of such performances adhere to a fixed literary pattern, that is, they constitute a distinctive genre. This *Gattung* is typified by two regular components: a divine instruction to the prophet to stage the act, and an interpretive statement spelling out its meaning, *i. e.*, its symbolic significance. In chapter 27, Jeremiah is commanded to lug a yoke and send such implements to the foreign ambassadors. In the latter case, the explanation itself becomes a full-blown prophetic commission, that is, an order to convey YHWH's comment to the envoys. As usual, the genre allows for a considerable degree of flexibility. The injunction to carry a yoke in v.

11 Georg Fohrer, *Die symbolischen Handlungen der Propheten* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1953).

2 lacks a separate interpretation. For the readers of the account, the divine speech quoted from v. 4 onwards serves as an elucidation of both of Jeremiah's closely related symbolic acts. And naturally, Hananiah's performance in 28:10–11 comes without divine instruction, as he is pictured as someone who goes against YHWH's will. The Hananiah story describes the execution of the act, and the interpretation is supplied by way of delivering a prophecy to the inner-textual audience (v. 11), whereas in the report of Jeremiah's mission to the ambassadors, these two items are left out for reasons of narrative economy.

A second remark: as emphasized before, similar reports abound in prophetic literature. This appears naturally, given that symbolic actions required no extraordinary capabilities: they normally utilized everyday props, and all that was needed was a so-called iconic quality to the performance, that is, a visual similarity to the message represented. And as Jer 36:23 illustrates, sign-acts were not even a prophetic privilege. So it may be safely stated that this channel of communication was common practice with the prophets, even though in specific cases—as in the symbolic acts depicted in Jer 27–28—we have no way to determine whether the accounts contain a historically reliable core. In other words, we cannot know if Jeremiah and an opponent of his called Hananiah really performed acts similar to those that the Bible ascribes to them. But what matters for the argument I want to present is the following: the symbolic acts in question were workable. They were strident, and therefore well-suited to attract attention and incite scandal. The props involved were ordinary agricultural implements, made from readily available materials. The symbolism could be made plain through brief, straightforward explanations. Moreover, the performances were designed in such a way that they could be brought before their target public without major effort: if a prophet had such easy access to members of the Judean ruling class as the book claims Jeremiah had, delivering yokes to visiting envoys should not have been a mission impossible. When Jeremiah was trudging about Jerusalem with that outlandish burden on his shoulders, he could be sure to be noticed by a major part of the population. And when Hananiah broke the yoke from Jeremiah's neck, he selected a location that ensured a large audience: the temple (Jer 28:1).

Keeping these general remarks in mind, we may proceed to the next section, which will bring us closer to the topic of this paper.

3. Deuteronomistic Redactional Expansions in Jer 13:1–11 according to Current Theory

The symbolic acts of the biblical prophets are interesting in several aspects. From the point of view of the history of religion, we may ask what they reveal about the prophets' *modus operandi* and understanding of their office. Or we may enquire to what extent such performances were based on concepts derived from magic, to the effect that symbolic acts were perceived, not merely as vivid representations of things to come, but as a way of turning the prophecies into incipient reality so that their full materialization would become inevitable. Yet here I want to give preference to a different tack. For accounts of symbolic acts likewise deserve attention from a literary perspective. There is an obvious reason for this: sound methodology demands that literary analysis always precedes the utilization of texts as historical sources. After all, only the former can provide the criteria required to assess the historical value of the text in question. Then, there is a more specific reason related to certain peculiarities of the book of Jeremiah. As mentioned above, reports of symbolic acts usually comprise an interpretive comment. Now, the respective passages in Jer repeatedly display the style normally associated with the deuteronomistic redaction of the book. Jer 13:1–11 forms a case in point. The pericope runs like this:

¹ YHWH said this to me, 'Go and buy a linen waistcloth and put it round your waist. But into the water you must not dip it.' ² And so, as YHWH had ordered, I bought a waistcloth and put it round my waist. ³ A second time the word of YHWH came to me, ⁴ 'Take the waistcloth that you have bought and are wearing round your waist. Up, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a cleft in the rock.' ⁵ So I went and hid it by the Euphrates as YHWH had ordered me. ⁶ A long time later, YHWH said to me, 'Up, go to the Euphrates and fetch the waistcloth I ordered you to hide there.' ⁷ So I went to the <river> Euphrates, and I searched, and I took the waistcloth from the place where I had hidden it. And there was the waistcloth ruined, no good for anything.

⁸ Then the word of YHWH was addressed to me as follows, ⁹ 'YHWH says this, "In the same way I shall ruin the pride of Judah, the immense pride of Jerusalem. ¹⁰ These evil people who refuse to listen to my words, who follow their own stubborn inclinations and follow other gods, serving and worshipping them will become like this waistcloth, no good for anything.

¹¹ For just as a waistcloth clings to a man's waist, so I made the whole House of Israel and the whole House of Judah cling to me, YHWH declares, to be my people, my glory, my honor and my pride. But they have not listened."

As far as I have seen, all recent commentaries and studies of reports of prophetic symbolic acts agree that this passage is indeed an example of the genre. And no doubt, the distinctive markers are here: YHWH commands the prophet to perform a fairly unconventional procedure, which he then interprets as a symbolic representation of his plans for the future. The set-up of the action is such that two consecutive stages yield opposing results. Consequently, for this report, contrary to our examples from chapter 27, there is no way around including the execution as well.

Until some decades ago, the passage was mostly regarded as a literary unit; what scholars were arguing about was the question of whether or not the narrative, being a first person report, was to be attributed to Jeremiah. For instance, in 1901 Duhm decried, with some egregiously acerbic remarks, what he perceived to be the poor intellectual quality of the piece. In particular, he emphasized the sheer impossibility of Jeremiah's two journeys to the Euphrates, and therefore passionately averred that the unit could not stem from the prophet's own quill, but had to be ascribed to a somewhat dim-witted redactor: "Schon das Aufwerfen der Frage, ob Jeremia das geschrieben habe, wäre eine Herabsetzung des Propheten."¹² Only four years later, von Orelli contradicted Duhm, defending the authenticity of the account. To do that, he adopted an old idea according to which the Hebrew term פְּרַת (v. 5; cf. פְּרַתָּה vv. 4, 6, 7) present in the narrative did not refer to the river Euphrates but to a wadi with a similar-sounding name a few miles north-east of Jerusalem, which Jeremiah had chosen as the site of his sign-act because its name was suggestive of the big Mesopotamian stream. Accordingly, von Orelli represented פְּרַת as "Phrath" in German.¹³ In 1968 Rudolph managed to concur with Duhm that פְּרַת referred to the river Euphrates, while at the same time insisting on the authenticity of the pericope: in his eyes, the text transmitted not an actual incident but a vision.¹⁴ These few examples may suffice to represent a general pattern in the treatment of Jer 13:1–11 that continued until about the seventies of the last century: the unity of the report was rarely disputed, whereas the main debate revolved around the question of authorship. Since most exegetes agreed that Jeremiah could not have

12 "The mere posing of the question whether Jeremiah might have written that, would be a demeaning of the prophet." (My translation.) Duhm, *Jeremia*, 119.

13 Von Orelli, *Jeremia*, 64–67.

14 Wilhelm Rudolph, *Jeremia* (2d ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), 91–93.

traveled to the Euphrates,¹⁵ the verdict regarding authenticity depended on the true nature of the depicted sign-act.

The discussion took a turn in the wake of J. P. Hyatts's¹⁶ and W. Thiel's¹⁷ studies on the dtr. redaction in the book of Jeremiah, which focused on the formulaic language within the concluding divine speech in vv. 8–11. In order to facilitate this discussion, I quote the relevant passage, broken down into Hebrew sentences. Square brackets [...] indicate words lacking in the Greek. Qualitative variants are marked by backslash \, with the retroverted LXX reading given to its left:¹⁸

וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:	a	8
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה	b	9
כָּכָה אֲשַׁחֲיֵת אֶת־גֹּאֲוֹן יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־גֹּאֲוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרֵב	aP	
[הָעָם] הַזֶּה [הָרַע] [הַמְּאֻנִּים לְשִׁמוּעַ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי] הַהֵלְכִים בְּשָׂרָוֹת לָבָם	b	10
וַיֵּלְכוּ \ ¹⁹ [הַהֵלְכִים אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרִים לְעִבְדָם וּלְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לָהֶם	a	
וַיְהִי כְּאֹזֹר הַזֶּה	c	
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָצִיחַ לְכָל:	a	
כִּי כְּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹק הָאֹזֹר אֶל־מַתְּנֵי־אִישׁ	b	11
כֵּן הַדְּבָקְתִּי אֵלַי אֶת־[כָּל־]בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־כָּל־בֵּית יְהוּדָה [נְאֻם־יְהוָה]	c	
לְהִיּוֹת לִי לְעָם וְלִשְׁם וּלְתִהְיֶה וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת וְלֹא שְׁמָעוּ:		

It may be helpful to place Jer 19:10–12 alongside 13:8–11:

וַשְׁבֵּרֶת הַבְּקֶבֶק לְעֵינַי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהֵלְכִים אוֹתָד:	10
וְאָמַרְתִּי [אֲלֵיהֶם]	a 11
כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה [צְבָאוֹת]	b
כָּכָה אֲשַׁבֵּר אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת	c
כְּאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבֵּר [אֶת־]כָּלִי הַיּוֹצֵר \ תִּרְשׁ	d

15 One of the rare exceptions is D. Emil Balla, "Jer 13 1–11," in *In Deo Omnia Unum* (ed. C. Schröder; Munich: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag), 99–101.

16 J. P. Hyatt, "Deuteronomic Edition of Jeremiah" in *A Prophet to the Nations* (ed. L. G. Perdue and B. W. Kovacs; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1984).

17 Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1–25* (WMANT 41; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973); idem, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26–45* (WMANT 52; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981).

18 For my own view of the relationship between the Hebrew and the Greek texts of Jeremiah, see my *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches. Textgeschichtlicher Rang, Eigenarten, Triebkräfte* (OBO 136; Freiburg Schweiz: Universitätsverlag – Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1994) and "Zur aktuellen Diskussion um das Verhältnis der Textformen des Jeremiabuches," in *Die Septuaginta: Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (ed. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; WUNT 219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2008), 630–53. A brief summary in English may be found in my "The Concept of the Empty Land in Jeremiah 37–43," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; BZAW 404; Berlin: de Gruyter 2010), 106–7.

19 G* και πορευθέντας.

אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִכָּל לְהִרְפֶּה עוֹד e
 [וּבְתַנְתָּ יִקְבְּרוּ מֵאֵין מְקוֹם לְקַבּוֹר:] f
 כֹּחַ-אֲעֲשֶׂה לְמְקוֹם הַזֶּה נְאֻם-יְהוָה וְלִיּוֹשְׁבָיו [לְתַת אֶת-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כְּתַנְתָּ: 12

As can be seen from this excerpt, v. 10 starts off with an extended casus pendens (10aP)²⁰ consisting of the nominal group [הַזֶּה] [הָרַע] and two participial phrases, which are governed by the nominal group and which are coordinated with the verbal clause 10b. The LXX Vorlage omits the second participial phrase, while offering a participial equivalent to 10b. The casus pendens is connected to the verbal sentence 10a הָיָה כְּאִזּוֹר הַזֶּה where it serves as subject. The beginning of 10aP is somewhat uncertain, since from the nominal group [הָרַע] [הַזֶּה] both the noun and the adjective are absent from the Greek, which reads ταῦτα ὅπου ὅπου ὅπου instead. הָרַע appears indispensable as an antecedent to the following plural participles, but it is difficult to say why it should have dropped from the LXX Vorlage (parablepsis (הָרַע → הַזֶּה ?)). הָרַע, on the other hand, is probably a gloss. Attributive adjectives and participles normally precede demonstrative pronouns. The reverse sequence, as found here, is rare, and mostly due to special circumstances:²¹ either the adjective or participle carries an apposition,²² or the wording has been secondarily rephrased.²³ The latter seems to apply to v. 10 as well: in the Masoretic textual tradition, הָרַע was added from parallels like 4:10, 11; 5:14, 23; 6:19, 21 and many more.²⁴

Commenting briefly on Jer 13:1–11, Hyatt found a deuteronomistic appendage in v. 11.²⁵ In a far more thorough examination, Thiel took Jer 13:1–11 as an authentic first-person-report that was amplified by a deuteronomistic redactor in vv. 10–11. Following Thiel, in the original edition of the piece, the concluding announcement of doom comprised only v. 9, the first three words of 10aP as well as 10ac: כֹּחַ אֲעֲשֶׂה אֶת-גְּאוֹן יְהוָה וְאֶת-גְּאוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרַב וְהָיָה הָרַע כְּאִזּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִצְלַח לְכָל הַיּוֹדֵה וְאֶת-גְּאוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרַב וְהָיָה הָרַע כְּאִזּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִצְלַח לְכָל.²⁶ This

20 For an analysis, see Walter Gross, *Die Pendenskonstruktion im Biblischen Hebräisch: Studien zum althebräischen Satz I*, (Studien zum althebräischen Satz 27; St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1987), 105–9.

21 See Eduard König, *Historisch-kritisches Lehrgebäude der hebräischen Sprache*, § 334η.

22 Cf. Jer 33:12; 51:60; similarly: Hag 2:9.

23 Insertions have occurred in Josh 23:7, 12 (cf. v. 4); Esth 9:29. For 2 Chr 1:10, cf. 1 Kgs 3:9. An unexplained case is Ezek 36:35.

24 For alternative attempts to reconstruct an original phrasing, see, e.g., William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1–25* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 394.

25 Hyatt, "Deuteronomic Edition," 255.

26 Thiel, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 170–73. Thiel shifted the verbal predicate וְהָיָה to the beginning of 10a and changed it to הָיָה, thus removing the casus pendens. This idea has aptly been

theory was based on the following observations: the phrase “to refuse to listen to my words” (מֵאֵן לְשָׁמוֹעַ אֶת־דְּבָרַי) 10aP has a parallel in 11:10, another deuteronomistic passage (cf. further 1 Sam 8:19; Neh 9:17). The combination “to walk in the stubbornness of one’s heart” (הֵלֵךְ בְּשָׁרְרוֹת לֵב) is likewise taken as a sign of deuteronomistic origin²⁷ (Thiel disregarded the omission of the phrase in the Greek). “Walking after other gods” (הֵלֵךְ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים) 10b is a charge frequently leveled by deuteronomistic authors,²⁸ as are the variations “to serve” them (עָבַד) and “to worship” them (שָׁחָה).³⁰ As for 11ab, Thiel pointed to the deuteronomistic idea that Israel “clings” (דָּבַק) to YHWH.³¹ Further, he underlined that the combination of “the house of Israel” and “the house of Judah” (11b) did not fit Jeremiah’s own situation, unlike the Deuteronomist’s. In addition, 11b continues with the (abbreviated) covenant formula “to be my people,”³² and the wordchain “glory, honor and pride” (לְשֹׁם וְלִתְהַלָּלָה וְלִתְפָּאָרָה) has a close parallel in Deut 26:19. The accusation of disobedience (לֹא שָׁמַעַתְּ “not listen” 11c) is very common in deuteronomistic portions.³³ Bearing in mind these facts, deuteronomistic influence in vv. 10–11 appears to be undeniable. In turn, Thiel found his identification of the original prophecy of doom in vv. 9b + 10a*c corroborated by a presumably original saying in 19:11a–e which displays a string of elements very similar to what can be found here: prophetic messenger formula (13:9a || 19:11b); כָּכָה אֶשְׁחִית (13:9b) || כָּכָה אֶשְׁבֵּר (19:11c); אֲשֶׁר לֹא־ (13:10c) || אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִיכַל לְהִרְפֶּה עוֹד (19:11e).

Following in the footsteps of Hyatt and Thiel, a fairly stable consensus has emerged that YHWH’s concluding pronouncement was reworked by deuteronomistic hands. But scholars still differ as to the

questioned by Christoph Levin, “Das Wort Jahwes an Jeremia. Zur ältesten Redaktion der jeremianischen Sammlung,” *ZTK* 101 (2004): 267 n. 44: “Die Konjekturen kann aber nicht erklären, wie der jetzige, vermeintlich verderbte Text entstanden ist.”

27 Cf. Deut 29:18; Jer 3:17; 7:24; 9:13; 11:8 MT; 16:12; 23:17 MT; cf. 18:12; Ps 81:13; Bar* 1:22.

28 Cf. Deut 6:14; 8:19; 11:28; 13:3; 28:14; Jdg 2:12, 19; 1 Kgs 11:10; Jer 7:6, 9; 11:10; 16:11; 25:6; 35:15.

29 Cf., e.g., Deut 7:4; 11:16; 13:7, 14; Jer 11:10; 16:11, 13; 22:9; 25:6; 35:15; and many more (for a complete listing see my *Deuterojeremianische Konkordanz* [ATSAT 63; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1998], 17).

30 Deut 8:19; 11:16; 17:3 etc.; Jer 16:11; 22:9; 25:6 (*Deuterojeremianische Konkordanz*, 17).

31 See Deut 4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:5; 30:20; Josh 22:5; 23:8; 2 Kgs 18:6.

32 Cf. Jer 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22 MT; 31:1, 33; 32:38. For the evidence from other books, see my *Deuterojeremianische Konkordanz*, 18f.

33 Cf., e.g., Jer 7:13, 24, 26, 28; 9:12; 16:12, and many more.

details. Some take v. 11 as an addition,³⁴ others both v. 10 and 11.³⁵ Some even regard the entire divine speech (vv. 8–11) as secondary.³⁶ Still others follow Thiel closely³⁷ or contemplate unspecified expansions in v. 10.³⁸ Recently, Åke Viberg assumed an interesting viewpoint. Proceeding from the fact that "there is no other interpretation of the prophetic symbolic act," he concluded "that vv. 8–11 do form the proper interpretation, but have been exposed to a certain amount of reformulation by later editors [...]." ³⁹ This reasoning makes an important point, because it comes down to the admission that a full explanation as provided in vv. 8–11 is indispensable to the report. If these verses (or parts of them) are secondary, they cannot have been appended, but must have *replaced* an earlier version of the extant wording.

This source-critical evaluation of our text represents a type of analysis that, in the last decades, has become a fairly common tenet of critical Jeremiah studies. The basic argument runs like this: first, scholars pinpoint deuteronomistic formulaic usage in a literary unit. Second, they notice that this vocabulary is unevenly distributed—as applies to our instance, where the typical parlance is identified in the final verses only. Third, from this situation scholars infer that deuteronomistic redactors revised an older edition of the unit by inserting the passages bearing their stamp. The book of Jeremiah abounds with pericopes offering similar findings, which are therefore dissected along the same pattern. Regarding this line of logic, I hold several methodological reservations that will be explicated in the following section.

34 E.g., Daniel Bourguet, *Des métaphores de Jérémie* (Études bibliques 9; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1987), 242–43; Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 159.

35 E.g., W. D. Stacey, *Prophetic Drama in the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1990), 133; Katrin Ott, *Die prophetischen Analogiehandlungen im Alten Testament* (BWANT 185; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009), 46.

36 Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006), 294; William McKane, *Jeremiah: Volume 1: 1–25* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001), 290f. For more complicated theories, see Franz D. Hubmann, "Jeremia 13,1–11: Zweimal Euphrat retour, oder wie "man" einen Propheten fertigmacht" in *Ein Gott, eine Offenbarung: Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese, Theologie und Spiritualität* (ed. F. Reiterer; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1991), 103–25; Levin, "Wort Jahwes," 265–69.

37 E.g., Gunther Wanke, *Jeremia 1,1–25,14* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1995), 132; Werner H. Schmidt, *Das Buch Jeremia Kapitel 1–20* (ATD 20; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 250.

38 Thus Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21A; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 669f.

39 Åke Viberg, *Prophets in Action: An Analysis of Prophetic Symbolic Acts in the Old Testament* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2007), 111.

4. Methodological Considerations

The methodological issues in need of discussion concern, in part, the current redaction-critical analysis of Jer 13:1–11, as well as other issues of a more generic character.

1. To begin with, as meticulous as Thiel's stocktaking of the formulaic language in Jer 13:1–11 may appear, it is not exhaustive. At least two more items should be added to his list. First, the two prophetic messenger formulas in the section belong to a sort that have shed their usual function of marking a prophetic pronouncement as divine utterance, serving as an ordinary introduction to divine speech instead. The case in v. 1 opens with YHWH's first command to Jeremiah, which, in the world of the text, is not intended for communication to a third party. The other example, in v. 9, introduces YHWH's final interpretive comment, that by its nature could be publicly proclaimed, but neither is Jeremiah ordered to do so, nor is the speech formally directed at anyone beyond the prophet (v. 8). Here, we encounter a kind of prophetic messenger formula that has been moved from its original setting to a mere *Sitz in der Literatur*. In the book of Jeremiah, this type of formula occurs regularly in portions that — according to current redaction-critical theory — are deuteronomistic, or have been reworked by a redactor schooled in deuteronomistic theology.⁴⁰ So one wonders why the examples in 13:1, 9 should represent an earlier layer.

Second, YHWH phrases his command in v. 1 in a way that is typical for the book of Jeremiah: ... הָלוֹךְ וְקִנִּיתָ לָּךְ אֲזִיז פְּשָׁתִּים. The formulaic injunction הָלוֹךְ + w'=*qatalta* occurs 10 more times in Jer, with only three additional instances elsewhere.⁴¹ Its closest parallel is to be found in 19:1: ... הָלוֹךְ וְקִנִּיתָ בְּקֶבֶךָ יִצְרָר תִּרְשָׁ. In a chapter in which vv. 11–12, as mentioned above, bear substantial resemblances to 13:9–11. In both cases, the set phrase stands next to one of the irregular prophetic messenger formulas highlighted here, and as the respective lists of examples evince, the two phenomena display patterns of distribution fairly similar to each other in the book of Jeremiah.⁴² Thiel dealt with the formulaic injunction only fleetingly in the context of 34:2,⁴³ but never considered it as a possible clue to redactional activity. The logic behind his

40 Jer 16:5; 17:19; 19:1 MT; 22:1; 24:5, 8; 25:15; 26:2; 27:2; 30:2; 33:2; 34:2a; 35:13; 37:7 AIT; cf. 15:19.

41 Jer 2:2 MT; 3:12; 17:19; 19:1; 22:1 LXX; 28:13; 34:2; 35:2, 13; 39:16; 2 Sam 24:12; 2 Kgs 5:10; Isa 38:5.

42 See notes 40 and 41.

43 Thiel, *Jeremia* 26–45, 38.

treatment of this idiom seems to be that it is supposed to represent the style of Jeremiah (or some other pre-deuteronomistic writer like Ba-ruch), in contrast to, for example, the formulaic usage in 13:10–11, which typifies deuteronomistic influence. While this position is not impossible *per se*, in view of the distribution of the formulaic injunctions and the irregular prophetic messenger formulas, the question arises whether these phenomena also betray the hand of later editors. But before conclusions are drawn, more methodological issues need to be addressed.

2. Another problem besetting Thiel's treatment of Jer 13:1–11 concerns his comparison of vv. 9–11 with 19:11–12. As mentioned before, Thiel considered the structural and lexical parallels between 13:9–10 and 19:11a–e to be a confirmation of his opinion that the basic stratum ended with (parts of) 13:10. In order to understand his logic, one ought to be aware that he subjected chapter 19 to an analogous examination, contending that the report of Jeremiah's sign-act with the earthen jug formerly came to a close with 19:11e while the remaining vv. 12–14 of the chapter were appended by a deuteronomistic hand.⁴⁴ So, the endings of the supposed original units resembled each other, which Thiel considered to be proof that his reconstructions were correct. In reality, though, he passed over important commonalities between the respective passages that cast serious doubts on his theory. 13:11ab offers a comparison with the structure "as + verb ... so + identical verb": ... כן הדבקותי ... כְּאֶשֶׁר יִדְבֵּק. In 19:11cd, we encounter a related pattern: כְּכֵּה ... אֶשְׂבֵּר ... כְּאֶשֶׁר יִשְׁבֵּר. Here, the succession of modal and main clause is swapped, and the deictic particle is כְּכֵּה in place of כן. Nonetheless, the similarity is striking. Following Thiel however, the former passage is deuteronomistic, whereas the latter belongs to the original layer of chapter 19. But the idea that two portions of text so similar in structure, and occurring in environments linked by several parallels, should be derived from different authors appears less than probable, even more so since 13:11ab cannot be construed as an imitation of 19:11cd. Further, the correspondence כְּאֶשֶׁר → כן in 13:11ab, deuteronomistic according to Thiel, has a counterpart in 19:11d, 12. Although in the latter case the affected clauses are less tightly connected, it poses an additional problem for his assertion that the components be taken as redactional in chapter 13, whereas in chapter 19 they are attributed to both the older report (11d) and a dtr expansion (v. 12). Moreover, as I attempted to show elsewhere, there are still more reasons why the severance of

44 Thiel, *Jeremia* 1–25, 219–226.

19:12–13 from the preceding verses is unjustified. Rather, the entire passage 19:1–13 is a deuteronomic creation.⁴⁵ If this is correct, the question ensues as to why the situation should be different in 13:1–11. In any case, the highlighted facts cannot be ignored when comparing the two chapters.

3. A further consideration concerns the procedure of literary and redaction criticism in general. When diachronic investigation separates a portion from a context, alleging different authorship, sound method stipulates that disagreements should be identified which pit that section against its environment, like, for instance, a contradiction to some other part, or the fact that the piece forms a doublet to another passage, reiterating the same detail for no good reason. But in our case, many scholars appear to see no need to abide by this rule, nor do they in analogous situations elsewhere in the book. When formulaic language crops up, lesser standards of proof seem to apply: the mere occurrence of characteristic turns of phrase is regarded as sufficient proof for positing the interference of an editorial hand. Yet under such circumstances, I find it mostly difficult to discern any friction between the formulaic and the non-formulaic sections. This is precisely what we encounter in Jer 13:1–11: the concluding divine speech is replete with clichéd material, but is in perfect harmony with what precedes it, as has been accurately noted by Viberg: “The reformulation and elaboration that seem to have occurred at a later time in accordance with Dtr language has not added anything that can not [sic] be understood as a natural and relevant interpretation of the prophetic symbolic act.”⁴⁶ Considering this, however, one may wonder why any secondary “reformulation and elaboration” should be conjectured at all. It has been argued that Thiel’s theory removes a contradiction between the references to “this people” (הָעָם הַזֶּה 10aP) in the plural (10aP.b) and the singular (10a) so that הָיָה 10a refers to הָיָה 9b rather than to הָיָה 10aP.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that the verb הָיָה often fails to agree, attaching a masculine singular form to a plural or/and feminine subject, even when the latter precedes the verbal predicate. The same is true for plural and/or feminine antecedents serving as subject in the related sentence. The preference for the simplest verbal form (i. e., masculine singular)

45 See my “Jeremia und der Priester Paschhur ben Immer: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie,” in *Kulte, Priester, Rituale: Beiträge zu Kult und Kultkritik im Alten Testament und Alten Orient* (ed. St. Ernst and M. Häusl; ATSAT 89; St. Ottilien: EOS, 2010), 375–401.

46 Viberg, *Prophets in Action*, 117.

47 Schmidt, *Jeremia* 1–20, 250.

seems to be particularly strong with injunctions and declarations of intent, such as in our case here.⁴⁸ In addition to that, the singular in 10a may have been facilitated through attraction by the singular *הָאִשָּׁה*. So in fact, the verbal and participial forms in 13:10 MT⁴⁹ match the common usage of the Hebrew Bible: the formulaic phrases from 10aP.b are mostly—in Jer exclusively—attested in the plural,⁵⁰ whereas *הָיָה*—especially in volitive forms—tends to favor the masculine singular, even when the subject is plural and/or feminine. Therefore we are not entitled to categorize the change in number from 10aP.b to 10a as irregular. Accordingly, the disruence cannot support the assumption of disunity either. In any case, *וַיְהִי* 10a does not affect the integrity of v. 11 in its context.

4. The next point concerns the general nature of the deuteronomistic vocabulary. When studying the passages in Jer couched in deuteronomistic diction, one will easily find that they almost exclusively comprise divine discourse, be it uttered by God himself or through the prophet as his speaker.⁵¹ This is exactly what happens in our example,

48 Jaakov Levi, *Die Inkongruenz im biblischen Hebräisch* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), 208–12, lists numerous examples. (1) *הָיָה* with the subject preceding in the same clause: (1a) feminine subject: Gen 15:17; Ezek 21:32; 2 Chr 17:13; (1b) composite subject: Isa 32:14; Ezek 16:49; 27:19; 40:21; Lam 3:47; Eccl 2:7; (1c) masculine plural subject: Isa 64:10; Eccl 2:7; (1d) feminine plural subject: Gen 41:53; cf. with *הָיָה* Ezek 36:2. (2) *יְהִי* with the subject preceding in the same clause, mostly expressing an injunction: (2a) feminine subject: Gen 28:22; Exod 12:49; 13:9; 28:32; Num 15:29; Deut 18:2; 2 Kgs 7:18; Ezek 37:26; Zech 14:15; Prov 29:21; 2 Chr 6:29; (2b) composite subject: Gen 9:2; 35:11; Lev 11:36; Lev 27:10, 33; Deut 25:11; 1 Kgs 8:37 (|| 2 Chr 6:28); 2 Kgs 20:19; Jer 14:15; 35:9; Ezek 44:30; 45:10; cf. with *יְהִי* Exod 21:4; (2c) masculine plural subject: Gen 31:8; Lev 24:5; Num 18:13; Ezek 18:13; (2d) feminine plural subject: Gen 47:24; Exod 28:7. (3) *יְהִי* or *יִהְיֶה* in disagreement with an antecedent serving as subject. Most of these examples express injunctions: Gen 1:29; 30:32; Exod 29:27–28; 30:4, 34; Lev 10:15; 13:2; Deut 19:2–3; Isa 19:19–20; 44:14–15; 55:13. Cf. also GK § 145u; JM § 150klm. For *יְהִי*, Levi p. 207 has only collected cases with following disruent subject: Gen 1:14; 1 Kgs 22:13; Jer 50:29; Ps 72:16; 103:13. Jer 13:10 does not feature in Levi's list, so he may have overlooked cases with preceding disruent subject.

49 In place of *וַיְהִי* 10a LXX offers the plural equivalent *καὶ ἔσονται*, but this says nothing about the *Vorlage* as Jer–LXX often deviates from the grammatical numbers to be found in MT.

50 For *הָאִשָּׁה*–D see further Jer 11:10; 1 Sam 8:19; Neh 9:17; for *אֲנִי* *אֶלֶּהֶם* *אֶתְּרִים* see further Jer 7:6; 11:10; 16:11; 25:6; 35:15; Deut 6:14; in the singular: Deut 8:19; 13:3; Judg 2:12; cf. Jer 7:9; Deut 11:28; 28:14; Judg 2:19; 1 Kgs 11:10. For *הָאִשָּׁה* *בְּשָׂרָהּ* *לָהֶם*, lacking in the Greek, see my *Konkordanz*, 144–45.

51 This statement can easily be verified by a perusal of the portions allotted to the deuteronomistic redaction by Hyatt, "Deuteronomistic Edition," Siegfried Herrmann, *Die prophetischen Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament: Ursprung und Gestaltwandel* (BWANT 85; Stuttgart: W Kohlhammer, 1965) and Thiel, *Jeremia 1–25 und Jeremia 26–*

in which the elements traditionally identified as redactional are limited to YHWH's final interpretive statement. And this situation turns out to be quite natural once the overall character of the deuteronomistic usage is taken into account. This terminology is parenetic in kind, and parenesis is, by definition, exhortative speech addressing an audience. Therefore, in literary units comprising narrative portions, parenesis will mostly occur in speeches by characters within the narrative (besides authorial commentaries of a suitable sort). So, the parenetic quality of deuteronomistic language places a vital restraint on its applicability: it is only to be expected in parenetic discourse.

Moreover, in Jer parenesis is generally the domain of YHWH and his prophet. Therefore, deuteronomistic phraseology will normally be restricted to divine and prophetic speeches, or more exactly, to those sections of their utterances that carry a parenetic stamp. Exceptions to this rule are rare.⁵² Jer 13:1–11 corresponds precisely to this pattern, as deuteronomistic language is clustered in YHWH's concluding interpretive comments. Yet in addition, we find typical diction in YHWH's opening words (1a-c), because the lexicon of the redactors of the book of Jeremiah—the “Deutero-Jeremianic” phrase book⁵³—also contained certain set phrases for introducing divine discourse, a fact that has not been adequately realized so far. Beyond this, the report seems to be devoid of specific usage. But this is necessarily so, for apart from the initial sentences, there is no way to phrase the commands to perform the symbolic act and the account of its execution in, as it were, “Deuteronomese.” Or to put it differently: if we attributed the non-formulaic parts to a writer other than the author who shaped the clichéd portions, we should be able to hypothesize that the presumably older level would have read differently, had it been penned by a redactor. However, this seems impossible, considering the inherent limitations to the applicability of the indicative parlance. We have no right to contend that the result would deviate from the given wording if an editor of a deuteronomistic or similar brand had created the entire piece. Many arguments for the identification of a deuteronomistic intrusion seem to tacitly imply that such redactors were somehow incapable of producing

45, as listed in Siegfried Herrmann, *Jeremia: Der Prophet und das Buch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 80f.

52 Leaving aside ch. 52, which is copied from 2 Kings 24–25, the balance looks as follows: in Jer 26:19 “some of the elders of the land” (v. 17) adopt deuteronomistic diction (for the presumed source analysis, see below n. 90), and in Jer 40:2–3 the writer has turned the Babylonian officer Nebuzaradan into a student of deuteronomistic theology. For authorial commentaries, one may point to 37:2 and 43:4, 7b for accusations of not listening to YHWH's words or voice.

53 See my *Deuterojeremianische Konkordanz*.

a text in non-formulaic Hebrew, which would be far-fetched, of course. Thus in the previous point, we saw that the clichéd sections in 13:1–11 create no tensions to the non-formulaic parts, and therefore they do not call for a separation of layers. Now, we find that the uneven distribution of the redactional terminology does not justify such assumptions either. On the contrary, the formulaic language occurs wherever possible; its dissemination in the unit is not suspicious at all but in perfect keeping with its very nature. In truth, 13:1–11 is as formulaic as its subject matter and the Deutero-Jeremianic dictionary allow it to be!

5. So far, the traditional method of identifying redactional complements in Jer based on terminology gave rise to serious reservations. The qualms mount further as soon as we examine the conclusions drawn from it. At the outset, it must be stressed that, as far as I know, no diachronic theory on 13:1–11 takes the formulaic beginning of the report into account; so there is no suggestion of postulating a basic level that is entirely free of the kind of vocabulary typical in redactional activity. But then again, the commencement of the narrative foils any attempt to reconstruct an original that is both well-rounded and devoid of the usage in question, because severing the initial sentences would leave a textual torso. Yet, even if we disregard v. 1 for the moment, the hypotheses hitherto put forward are less than convincing. In Thiel's reconstruction and the theories eliminating vv. 10 and 11,⁵⁴ YHWH proclaims an announcement of a doom whose motivation is limited to the word נָאֵן in 9b. This noun, however, is a highly ambivalent term. It may be used to extol YHWH's majesty;⁵⁵ referring to humans, it can convey vastly divergent connotations. On the one hand, it may depict glory or an object of (justifiable) pride,⁵⁶ and it repeatedly does so even within divine promises of salvation, leaving no doubt that נָאֵן carries positive connotations.⁵⁷ Alternatively, the noun often condemns haughtiness, arrogance and presumption.⁵⁸ Jer 13:9b belongs to the latter category, yet this is only made clear by the accusations in vv. 10aP.b.11c. That the passages lifting the ambiguities of 9b should form a later sup-

54 See above, n. 35.

55 Exod 15:7; Isa 2:10, 19, 21; 24:14; Mic 5:3.

56 Isa 13:19; 14:11; Ezek 24:21; 30:6, 18; 33:28; Amos 6:8; 8:7; Ps 47:5; Job 40:10.

57 Isa 4:2; 60:15; Nah 2:3.

58 Lev 26:19; Isa 13:11; 16:6 (|| Jer 48:29); 23:9; Ezek 7:20, 24; 16:49, 56; Hos 5:5 || 7:20; Zeph 2:10; Zech 9:6; Ps 59:13; Job 35:12; Prov 8:13; 16:18. For instances resisting clear-cut classification, cf. Ezek 32:12; Zech 10:11.

plement is certainly a problem for the assumptions under debate.⁵⁹ And what is more, all those who exclude v. 11 deprive the text of an explanation as to why Jeremiah was to put on the waistcloth for a while (1d-2).⁶⁰ Only vv. 9–11 in their entirety present a comprehensive interpretation of the sign-act. In addition, those cutting out v. 11⁶¹ alone fail to achieve the goal of purging the concluding divine speech of deuteronomistic elements, thus rendering the diachronic theorizing useless. Still less credible are proposals which relegate the whole of vv. 8–11 to secondary expansions,⁶² implying that the basic layer contained no interpretive statement at all, in patent breach of the rules of the genre, making it very hard to tell why the story was committed to writing in the first place. Apparently, there is reason to recall the principle that the purpose of diachronic assumptions is to reduce the problems of coherence in a text, not to increase them. So, on top of all the other difficulties, the elimination of formulaic passages seems unable to deliver meaningful results. This would apply all the more if the procedure was extended to v. 1.

Let us summarize what we have found so far. Apart from minor glosses testified to by the LXX, there are no sufficient reasons to posit that Jer 13:1–11 derives from a history of growth, and contrary to the mainstream of critical scholarship, the presence of deuteronomistic language is by no means a clue to that effect. In fact, the excision of formulaic usage is not only unfounded, but it is also impossible because, if carried through consistently, it would truncate the text. Even if we leave aside v. 1, the removal of the clichéd parlance yields reconstructions that appear more problematic than the given wording. If this is correct, two inferences impose themselves: first, our account is a unified piece which, second, was fashioned in its entirety by a deuteronomistic writer. As the next section attempts to show, this conclusion is corroborated by additional evidence relating to the credibility of the story being told.

59 One might ask why 9b refers to Judah and Jerusalem whereas 11b names Israel and Judah. The two pairs correspond exactly to the thrust of the respective phrases: 9b refers to the exiles while v. 11 reflects the fate of YHWH's people as a whole.

60 That v. 11 is inseparable from v. 1 has been persuasively argued by Hubmann, "Zweimal Euphrat retour," 117. Strangely enough, the reference of v. 11 to v. 1 has been adduced *against* v. 11 forming an integral part of the context, with the argument that the allusion to Jeremiah's wearing of the waistcloth picks out a single trait of the complex sign-act (thus Schmidt, *Jeremia 1–20*, 250). This description fits 9b, too; so according to this reasoning, 9b would have to be allotted to a later hand as well.

61 See above, n. 34.

62 Above, n. 36.

5. Jer 13:1–11 and Real World Plausibility

It is truly astounding what Jer 13:1–11 wants us to believe. Jeremiah is commanded to buy and wear a linen waistcloth. After a while, he has to go and conceal the item at the Euphrates. For that, he must cover a distance estimated at something between five hundred⁶³ and one thousand⁶⁴ kilometers each way. As for the time needed to complete this trip, a hint is provided by Ezra 7:7–9, which envisages four months of travel from Babylon to Jerusalem. "After many days" (v. 6), the prophet retraces his steps in order to retrieve the waistcloth. In the end, Jeremiah would have performed a complex, multi-stage prophetic sign-act that took more than a year to complete. During that extremely long period, Jeremiah would have spent the largest part of his time in places far away from his audience, clocking up several thousand kilometers in the process. Moreover, if he wished for his activities to be monitored by eyewitnesses, as was natural with sign-acts, he would have had to rely on a group of amazingly self-denying followers.

Given the sheer incredibility of this plot, scholars wonder what to do with it. As mentioned before, the idea that Jeremiah limned a vision, previously championed by Maimonides and Calvin, was still defended by Wilhelm Rudolph in 1968.⁶⁵ But to the best of my knowledge, it has not been reiterated since, as the text lacks any properties of vision reports, while the book of Jeremiah does not hesitate to relate such reports elsewhere.⁶⁶ The evaluation of the passage largely depends on the interpretation of the Hebrew term פָּרָה (v. 5; cf. פָּרָה vv. 4, 6, 7), which elsewhere designates the Euphrates. In Jer 13 however, most scholars nowadays assume that the name refers to a site in Benjamin: the hamlet Parah (פָּרָה) mentioned in Josh 18:23. This site is mostly identified with *Hirbet 'Ēn Fāra* (coord. 179.137) located approximately 8 kilometers northeast of Jerusalem and 4 kilometers northeast of Jeremiah's hometown Anathoth, close to the spring 'Ēn Fāra feeding the Wadi Fara.⁶⁷ Of late, Israel Finkelstein suggested the equation of פָּרָה / פָּרָה with *Tell el-Fūl* (coord. 172.136), commonly identified with Saul's home town Gibeah, which is situated about 5 kilometers to the north of Jeru-

63 Thus Kelvin G. Friebel, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts* (JSOTSup 283; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 106 (350 miles).

64 Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 91.

65 Cf. McKane, *Jeremiah* 1–25, 287, and Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 93, with references.

66 Jer 1:11–19; 4:23–26; 24; cf. 31:26

67 See, e.g., Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 396; Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 1–20, 668f.

saalem and roughly 2 kilometers to the northwest of Anathoth.⁶⁸ Whether Finkelstein will succeed in garnering support for his proposal remains to be seen. The association of פָּרַת with פָּרָה was possibly attested as early as in the translation of Aquila, that represents פָּרַתָּה v. 4 by εἰς Φαράν. Whatever this term means, it definitely does not signify the Euphrates.⁶⁹ The first author known to have explicitly advocated the equation is the 11th century lexicographer al-Fāṣī. Ever since the idea was revived independently in the 19th century,⁷⁰ the notion that Parah provided the setting for a sign-act, at least similar to the one narrated in ch. 13, has been embraced by an increasing number of exegetes. Proponents of the theory presume that the site was chosen for its name, which lent itself to a pun that the prophet wished to exploit to get his message across: the Euphrates, i.e., Babylonia, was the place where Jerusalem's and Judah's pride would be ruined. Furthermore, the short distance between Jerusalem and Parah is supposed to make the feat viable. In particular, Jeremiah was able to take along witnesses, similarly to what he did according to 19:1, 10, when he staged his sign-act with the earthen jug outside the walls of the city. The fact that 13:1–11 fails to mention observers is put down to narrative economy, which allows authors to omit what is taken for granted.⁷¹ Occasionally, scholars imagine a performance even simpler than trips to Parah: Jeremiah just declared some object—some wadi or creek or a mere drawing on the ground—to represent the Euphrates.⁷² Still others take the sign-act to be a purely literary fiction that was never put into practice in any way.⁷³

If we endeavor to put historical questions to our account at all, the text must first be subjected to a proper exegesis that provides the criteria as to the narrative's historical value. Furthermore, if we try to specify the place of Jer 13:1–11 in the history of Jeremianic literature, which we strive to do, it must be clear that we locate a text, not some incident

68 Israel Finkelstein, "Tell el-Ful Revisited: The Assyrian and Hellenistic Periods (With a New Identification)," *PEQ* 143 (2011): 106–18.

69 Rudolph, *Jeremiah*, 91. The meaning of the variant פָּרַתָּה in 4Q70 for MT פָּרַת v. 5 remains unclear and is therefore disregarded here.

70 See especially Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 396, and McKane, *Jeremiah* 1–25, 286f., for references.

71 Thus, e.g., Thiel, *Jeremiah* 1–25, 176; Friebe, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts*, 107; Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 1–20, 667; Viberg, *Prophets in Action*, 113.

72 For more or less fanciful speculations on how the sign-act with the linen waistcloth might have looked in reality, see, e. g., Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 297; Jones, *Jeremiah*, 196f.; Bender, *Sprache des Textilen*, 105f.

73 Thus, e.g., José Luis Sicre, *Profetismo en Israel: el Profeta, los Profetas, el Mensaje* (Estella: Ed. Verbo Divino, 1992), 178; Stulman, *Jeremiah*, 135; Allen, *Jeremiah*, 157.

that perhaps laid at its root. Nonetheless, a good starting point for highlighting some relevant aspects of the given wording may be found in the theory referred to just now: the tradition behind the report originated from a sign-act performed at Parah, a place a few kilometers away from Jerusalem, that was selected for the allusion to the Euphrates implied in its name. Should this be correct, it must be emphasized that the tradents were obviously not inclined to rely on the ability of their intended public to realize the pun. For even the consonantal Hebrew text of v. 5 did not transmit the spelling of Parah known from Josh 18:23 (פֶּרַח), but used the one commonly designating the Euphrates (פֶּרַת). The Tiberian vocalization corroborated this practice (פֶּרֶת). Therefore, as the text stands, the prophet travels to Mesopotamia, not to Parah. Furthermore, this understanding of Jeremiah's journeys is very old, as its support by the ancient translations evinces. The LXX translator rendered פֶּרַת by Εὐφράτης, and in v. 7 he added the apposition ποταμόν "the river" (inserted the above translation in pointed brackets).⁷⁴ Targum, Peshitta and Vulgata relate פֶּרַת to the distant stream, too. So, from the earliest periods of the textual transmission known to us, we come across readers who were prepared to picture Jeremiah embarking twice on the arduous voyage to Mesopotamia.

Granted, we cannot be sure that the explicit mention of the Euphrates represents more than a later misunderstanding that took the symbol for the symbolized. However, there is evidence which cautions against hastily dismissing as secondary the reference to the faraway river. When at the start YHWH orders the prophet to wear the waistcloth (1d), he adds the curious command to keep the item away from water (1e): "But into the water you must not dip it," according to the MT, or "But into the water it must not go," following the LXX.⁷⁵ Both variants place the element "into the water" (וּבַמַּיִם) at the head of the clause, before the verb, thus bestowing heavy emphasis upon the prepositional group, and evoking a strong sense of contrast to the preceding instruction to put on the garment.⁷⁶ Lacking any further elaboration, the prohibition is puzzling. Some still espouse Rashi's exposition that Jeremiah was forbidden to wash the waistcloth so that, full of sweat, it would rot

74 That the clarification represents an inner-Greek voice is clear from the comparison with related passages, since for "the river Euphrates" the Hebrew Bible regularly says נְהַר־פֶּרַת (Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7; 11:24; Josh 1:4; 2 Sam 8:3; 2 Kgs 23:29; 24:7; Jer 46:2, 6 MT, 10; 1 Chr 18:3) and only once נְהַר פֶּרַת (1 Chr 5:9), yielding (ὁ) ποταμός Εὐφράτης in the Greek, with ποταμός preceding the proper noun.

75 καὶ ἐν ὕδατι οὐ διελεύσεται for יִבְּרִים לֹא יִבֶּה*.

76 Cf. Walter Groß, *Die Satzteilfolge im Verbalsatz alttestamentlicher Prosa untersucht an den Büchern Dtn, Ri und 2Kön* (FAT 17; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996), 147.

faster.⁷⁷ Yet if this was the intention, the author could have clearly said so.⁷⁸ And what is more, v. 11 interprets Jeremiah's wearing of the garment as a token of Israel's and Judah's closeness to YHWH, a state that would hardly be construed as accelerating the ruin of his chosen people. So, what the prophet has to avoid is letting the waistcloth get into contact with water at all. This import is even more obvious in the probably older reading of the LXX that passes over Jeremiah's agency in silence. Consequently, the natural explanation would be that the sign-act operates with two opposing phases in which the waistcloth is given two opposing sorts of treatment. In stage one, the garment has to be worn by Jeremiah and kept clear of water. In stage two, it has to be hidden at a place called פָּרָה, and because the opposite of the provision 1e now applies, the waistcloth must be soaked in water.⁷⁹ There is no explicit command to do so, which was dispensable, though, if פָּרָה did not refer to a settlement but to a body of water: the Euphrates.

Still more details point in that direction. Jeremiah is ordered to hide the garment in a rock crevice (נָקִיץ הַסֵּלֶע v. 4), from where he has to unearth it later on (חַפֵּר v. 7). One may wonder what the cleft in a rock was needed for, except for securing its content from being carried away. Furthermore, one may ask in what way are rock crevices places where you dig things out of. If the loincloth were merely to be buried, any spot in the ground that Jeremiah would be able to retrace would have done. If, however, we are expected to envision the prophet cramming the piece into a rock cleft and then stuffing the gap with dirt, we might be forgiven if we failed to understand how this method was supposed to speed up the spoilage of the item at the heart of the proceedings. Yet, the portrayal of Jeremiah's activities makes perfect sense if we imagine him storing the loincloth in a stream of water where it would rot much faster, while the decomposing remainders was prevented from being washed away with the rock crevice serving as some sort of container. So, besides the name of Jeremiah's destination, the story contains several traits encouraging the interpretation that the original author indeed wanted us to picture the prophet taking two trips to Mesopotamia. Needless to say, in such an understanding, the sign-act must be purely fictitious.

All the same, given the penchant of scholars to take our text as the account of a performance that Jeremiah really staged in part at Parah,

77 The interpretation is embraced by Lundbom, *Jeremiah* 1–20, 668.

78 The phrase כָּבַשׁ-D "to wash" with an object designating a piece of clothing is very frequent in the OT. Cf., e.g., Gen 49:11; Exod 19:10, 14; Lev 6:20, and many more.

79 Thus also, e.g., Bourguet, *Métaphores*, 249.

we ought to consider this alternative as well. Then, during the first phase of the sign-act, the prophet would have had to sport a new waistcloth in public for long enough for his fellow Judeans to register. It is impossible to guess how much time this might have taken. We could even wonder if Jeremiah's garb was capable of arousing any interest at all; in fact, we have no reason to contend that wearing a waistcloth was anything unusual.⁸⁰ In phases two and three, the prophet must have traveled to Parah twice in order to store the garment "in a cleft in the rock" first (v. 4), and then to recover the remains later on. The return trip of about 10–16 kilometers from Jerusalem—depending on where we have to look for the hamlet—would have taken the larger part of a day to complete. In view of the distance and the time needed, it is not inconceivable that Jeremiah was escorted by companions acting as eyewitnesses. Yet it defies imagination that for fulfilling this role he could muster people other than his devoted disciples. This is a crucial distinction to the sign-act with the earthen jug, which is reported to have been performed right outside, or not far from, the Potsherd Gate,⁸¹ that is, at or close to Jerusalem's garbage dump. It seems possible that Jeremiah, with the necessary fanfare, managed to lure leading members of the Judean polity into following him to a site only a few yards from the city frequented by its denizens anyway. But he could barely lead them twice to a place requiring a major part of a day to visit. The question is whether a prophet would go to such lengths to preach to the converted alone.

Sure enough, we cannot rule out the idea that Jeremiah attempted to spread his message in a way that looks ineffective to us. So for the sake of the argument, let us accept the idea that נָתַת in Jer 13 refers to Parah rather than the Euphrates. What appears even less believable than two outings to a village a few miles away, is the role of the garment at the center of the sign-act. An אָזוֹר was "a short loincloth, tightly girded round the waist (Jer 13:11), and normally held up with a belt."⁸² According to the OT, such pieces of clothing could also be made of leather (2 Kgs 1:8). So, when YHWH specifies that the prophet should buy a *linen* waistcloth, he seems to wish for an item in mint condition,

80 As Friebe, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts*, 112, correctly emphasizes: "[O]verall, the initial action was rather commonplace and thus only mildly attention attracting."

81 Jer 19:1–13. As is generally known, the passage fuses the two locations of the Potsherd Gate and the Tophet in the valley Ben Hinnom outside the Potsherd Gate, an ambiguity only resolved in favor of the Tophet in the secondary appendage from v. 14 on. For details, see my "Jeremia und der Priester Paschhur ben Immer."

82 Viberg, *Prophets in Action*, 113.

but one made of a material that would rot more rapidly than leather.⁸³ That linen decomposes faster than leather stands to reason, although this does not imply that the prophet could easily calculate or control the process. Linen fabric is a robust material that tolerates intensive washing; its durability exceeds that of cotton cloth by two to three times.⁸⁴ In antiquity, similar to today, linen was utilized for textiles that needed to be hardwearing like, for instance, sails, hunting- and fishing-nets, or awnings. Even breastplates were manufactured in linen.⁸⁵ Thus, it was the material of choice for use in harsh outdoor conditions, such as wind, water, and intense sunlight. When Jeremiah submerged the waistcloth in water, it must therefore have been nearly impossible to estimate the time required for the garment to attain the state of decay suitable for his demonstration. And furthermore, if he stored the artifact in a place necessitating a half-day's trip to inspect, he could not quickly drop by to determine the proper moment for phase three. So, even when pictured at Parah, the sign-act appears to be far from viable. This applies all the more if Jeremiah, as many scholars seem to think, hid the garment in the cleft of a rock somewhere on dry land. Even if he chose the wet season for his purpose, it would have taken weeks or months for the waistcloth to reach the desired condition. But however we conceive of the prophet's activities in real-world terms, the text itself declares that it took "many days" (v. 6) to proceed from stage two to stage three of the symbolic act. Such a venture would be totally impracticable.

As a consequence, the hypothesis that Jeremiah carried out his sign-act with the waistcloth in a place called Parah rather than at the Euphrates does not really solve the problem of feasibility. The enactment still included too many phases, too great distances to cover, and time frames both too extended and too hard to control. Furthermore, the relevant performances were barely eccentric or scandalous enough to provoke passionate responses. Stage one, the wearing of the loincloth, was too commonplace to cause a stir, and stage three, the retrieval of the ruined garment, occurred far from those concerned. The rotten item of clothing would subsequently have had to be put on exhibit in Jerusa-

83 Some scholars presume that the material of the waistcloth is motivated by Jeremiah's priestly background (cf. Jer 1:1); thus, e.g., Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 668. Bourguet, *Métaphores*, 249–50 reviews the evidence and concludes persuasively "que 'zvor pštyr n'a certainement pas de connotation sacerdotale et que cela doit désigner un vêtement relativement banal, sans connotation particulière" (250).

84 See entry "Leinen," in *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1975), 782a.

85 Pekridou-Gorecki, art. "Linen, flax" (n. p.).

lem, accompanied by intricate explanations—another phase, number four by now, which would have been indispensable in the real world, no matter if the narrator chose to pass it over in silence. Thus, wherever the sign-act is envisaged, it is purely theoretical; it only works in literature, not in real life. If Jeremiah ever executed a symbolic performance with a waistcloth, it can have only remotely resembled what we read in our text today.

The fictitious nature of the narrated events is fully borne out by the literary character of the account. If the report fails to mention witnesses, this is not because they are taken for granted, but because the set-up of the sign-act made it hard to involve observers at all, let alone an audience that was not exactly keen to heed the bothersome diviner's message. Another unrealistic trait is the fact that the elucidation is not imparted step by step but delayed right up to the end of a multi-stage process. And finally, it comes as no surprise that there is no command to relay the explanation to the Judean public. This gap is to be expected if the interpretation of Jeremiah's sign-act with the linen waistcloth had never been broadcast through a medium other than our text. These findings are in perfect keeping with our earlier inference that the account is a unified piece of redactional origin, written in hindsight at a time when legends had the opportunity to sprout around Jeremiah's person.

6. Conclusions

The report of Jeremiah's symbolic act with the waistcloth in Jer 13:1–11 is a unified deuteronomistic creation, as its formulaic passages in tandem with the purely theoretical nature of its plot demonstrate. The small retouchings testified to by the LXX aside, the pericope bears no traces of major secondary alterations. In particular, it does not warrant the attribution of the clichéd parlance in vv. 10–11 to a later hand. On the contrary, all observations converge to the inference that the characteristic terminology has been part and parcel of the account from the moment it was penned (as has never been doubted for v. 1). Jer 13:1–11 epitomizes the stance on the Babylonian golah held by the deuteronomistic redaction of Jer 1–25, which was developing during the exilic period on Judean soil. Its theological outlook included the belief that the deportees were doomed to annihilation. The same view is voiced in 8:3; 9:15 and 16:13, embodying the very attitude towards the expatriates which is combated in Ezek 11:14–16 and 33:23–29. This standpoint sets the first batch of deuteronomistic redactional activity apart from the

second one that covered Jer 26–44 and, being undertaken in Mesopotamia, cast the exile in quite a different light.⁸⁶

Our findings do not only affect the interpretation of the pericope under discussion, they also bear on the methods and results of redaction criticism in the book of Jeremiah in general. For this prophetic document abounds with literary subunits carrying traits similar to what we encountered in our example: narrative frames comprising divine or prophetic speeches replete with distinctive phraseology. Under such circumstances, many scholars tend to ascribe the formulaic passages to editorial revisions. During the past decades, excising clichéd portions from their contexts seems to have grown into some sort of unreflected on habit. This method, first, fails to give proper thought to the question of whether or not the affected phrases stand in tension to their environments; second, it overlooks the limits drawn to the applicability of formulaic parlance; and third, it does not consider the plausibility of the ensuing reconstructions sufficiently. My own probings into further test cases confirmed what we saw in Jer 13:1–11: vocabulary emblematic of the deuteronomistic school normally points to the non-authentic nature of the embedding literary units, but it does not by itself indicate compositeness within those units. Moreover, and moving beyond the confines of the present paper, it should be added that such vocabulary does not necessarily indicate deuteronomistic provenance either. For the “Deutero-Jeremianic” tradition was a long-lived phenomenon, which lasted up to the latest intrusions still lacking in the LXX. Alongside the deuteronomistic strand in the book, it comprised several similar, but non-deuteronomistic strata. For tracing a history of growth in a passage and specifying its precise redactional “horizon,”⁸⁷ it is not enough to sift out the formulaic elements, as additional criteria need to be considered. Cases in point are Jer 19:1–20:6,⁸⁸ 24,⁸⁹ 26,⁹⁰ 34:8–22,⁹¹ 35,⁹² 36⁹³ and 42.⁹⁴

86 See my “Das jüdische und das babylonische Jeremiabuch,” in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007* (ed. A. Lemaire; VTSup 133; Leiden: Brill 2010), 239–64.

87 On the term “horizon” (German *Horizont*), see Wolfgang Richter, *Exegese als Literaturwissenschaft; Entwurf einer alttestamentlichen Literaturtheorie und Methodologie* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 117.

88 See my “Jeremia und der Priester Paschhur ben Immer.”

89 See my “Jeremia 24: Geschichtsbild und historischer Ort,” *JNWSL* 25 (1999): 151–83.

90 See my *Jeremia im Parteienstreit: Studien zur Textentwicklung von Jer 26, 36–43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte Jeremias, seines Buches und jüdischer Parteien im 6. Jahrhundert* (BBB 82; Frankfurt a. M.: Anton Hain, 1992), 17–33; Wanke, *Jeremia* 25,15–52,34, 237–38.

To conclude: in recent decades, redaction-critical research into the book of Jeremiah appears to have taken a doubtful path, and is in need of reorientation. As argued above, a fresh methodological reflection will not render the theory of a deuteronomistic redaction obsolete, but will entail substantial adjustments as to, for instance, the quantity of text to be attributed to the deuteronomistic editors, our portrayal of how they went about their work, and the description of their goals. To name but one example: contrary to popular views, these redactors did not only compose prose speeches and insert divine or prophetic discourse into narratives, but they fashioned entire narrative units from scratch, like, for example, Jer 13:1–11. Thus, for certain narrative sections in Jeremiah, what Martin Noth said in a famous phrase on the Deuteronomistic History seems to hold true: the deuteronomistic editors were not only redactors, but also authors.⁹⁵ Furthermore, closer attention to the conceptual makeup will reveal that some texts, while displaying linguistic affinities to the deuteronomistic redaction, cannot be meaningfully termed deuteronomistic. Yet the latter is a topic that transcends the reach of the present essay.

91 See my *Jeremia, der Tempel und die Aristokratie. Die patrizische (schafanidische) Redaktion des Jeremiabuches* (Kleine Arbeiten zum Alten und Neuen Testament 1; Waltrop: Spenner, 2000), 25–28.

92 Ibid., 28–32.

93 See my *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 73–100, and my "Baruchs Erben: Die Schriftprophetie im Spiegel von Jer 36" in *"Wer darf hinaufsteigen zum Berg JHWHs?" Beiträge zu Prophetie und Poesie des Alten Testaments* (ed. H. Irsigler; ATSAT 72; St. Ottilien: EOS, 2002), 145–70.

94 This chapter represents the opposite situation where Thiel and his followers have overstated the redactional share. See my "The Concept of the Empty Land in Jeremiah 37–43," 129–32.

95 Cf. Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT, 1981), 10: "Dtr. was not merely an editor but the author."

Drought and Locust Plague in Joel 1–2

CHRISTOPH LEVIN

For Joel Giegold

1. Lamentation about Drought

Other than in the river oases of Egypt and Mesopotamia, life in Syria and Palestine depends on rain. The vegetation period lasts from October to March, whereas the summer is completely rainless. The beginning of the winter rains is longingly awaited. In the ancient world, the return of the water was celebrated in the cult. In mythology, it was held to be the victory of the weather god over chaos.

The return of the rain was uncertain from year to year. It could arrive too late, or there could be too little, or it could fail to materialize at all. In the conditions of the ancient world this meant the threat of famine. Drought was the classic reason for leaving the land in order to seek a living somewhere else. This is what we are told about Abraham (Gen 12:10), Isaac (Gen 26:2), Joseph's brothers (Gen 45:10–11), Elijah (1 Kgs 17:10) and Elimelech (Ruth 1:1). We know the story of how, under King Ahab, Elijah proclaims that for a number of years there is going to be neither dew nor rain (1 Kgs 17:1). Elijah also prophesies the end of the drought to the king (18:42), before it breaks in a dramatic thunderstorm over Carmel (18:42–45).

Like war and pestilence, drought was a public emergency. "Sword, hunger, and pestilence" (Jer 14:12 and *passim*) constitute the classic triad of plagues. As a matter of course, the attempt was made to master the drought by religious means. The people hoped that their rescue would come from the God Yahweh. The cultic ceremonies which were put on for this purpose were public acts. They were one of the typical occasions for the people's hymn of lamentation. An example of this genre has been preserved, embedded in Jer 14:1–9.¹ In its description of the people's plight, it is a moving document, even though we may assume that prayers of this kind were not written for a particular occasion but had already acquired their conventional form.

1 See also Jer 4:23–26, and Isa 24:4–11 which is near to Joel 1.

We find similarly impressive descriptions of distress in the book of Joel. In the book's first chapter, there are several calls for collective lament. In Joel 2:18–27 this lament is answered by Yahweh—in the form among other things of the salvation oracle. It would seem that in the book of Joel we can detect the elements of a lamentation liturgy.² However, these elements emerge only if the book is subjected to a detailed analysis.

In the form that we currently have, the book of Joel presents itself in bewildering diversity. On the one hand locusts are made responsible for the distress, on the other hand an extreme drought is described. The causes for the situation have to be distinguished—indeed they are actually contradictory. The description of the locusts passes into the description of a devastating military attack. The drought acquires a dimension which turns into an eschatological catastrophe for the human race, comparable to the Isaiah apocalypse in Isa 24. This merges with the traditional motif about the Day of Yahweh, here already in the modified form of the prophecy of disaster which it has been given in the books of Amos (Amos 5:18–20)³ and Zephaniah (Zeph 1:14–16a).⁴

The trend of the recent exegesis is to see the book—apart from some glosses—as a unity,⁵ precisely because of this confusion, which presents considerable impediments to the analysis, and to assume that the text as we have it has a meaningful structure which we only have to detect.⁶

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- 2 See esp. Walter Baumgartner, "Joel 1 und 2," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft: Karl Budde zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. K. Marti; BZAW 34; Gießen: Töpelmann, 1920), 10–19.
 - 3 See esp. Reinhard Müller, "Der finstere Tag Jahwes: Zum kultischen Hintergrund von Am 5,18–20," *ZAW* 122 (2010): 576–92.
 - 4 See Christoph Levin, "Zephaniah: How this Book Became Prophecy," in *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former and Latter Prophets and Other Texts* (ed. L. L. Grabbe and M. Nissinen; Ancient Near East Monographs 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 117–39, esp. 131–36, repr. in *Re-Reading the Scriptures: Essays in the Literary History of the Old Testament* (FAT 87; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 263–81, esp. 275–79.
 - 5 Wilhelm Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten* (HKAT 3/4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), 86–87, and Karl Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton* (KHC 13; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1904), 111–26, maintained the unity of the book against Vernes and Rothstein (see below n. 7). More recently Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos* (trans. W. Janzen, S. D. McBride, Jr., and C. A. Muenchow; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977; German original 1969), 6–8; Willem S. Prinsloo, "The Unity of the Book of Joel," *ZAW* 104 (1992): 66–81; Jörg Jeremias, "Joel/Joelbuch," *TRE* 17 (1988): 91–97, esp. 92–94.
 - 6 James L. Crenshaw, *Joel* (AB; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 30–34, presents an overview over some of the proposals. An example is the analysis by Barbara Schlenke and Peter Weimar, "'Hab Mitleid, Jahwe, mit deinem Volk!' (Joel 2,17). Zu Struktur und Komposition von Joel (Teil 1)," *BZ* 53 (2009): 1–28; Barbara Schlenk, and Peter Weimar, "'Und JHWH eiferte für sein Land und erbarmte sich

Less subtle, but harmonizing with the biblical findings otherwise, is the hypothesis that the book of Joel, too, is a literary structure which has grown up by way of several strata, and that its present form can most readily be understood if we assume that different aspects have gradually come to overly one another.⁷

The heading says that the book is to be understood as “the word of Yahweh,” that is to say as a prophetic writing. But this does not mean that prophecy is an adequate definition of the book’s genre, at least as far as the first two chapters are concerned. Bernhard Duhm observed about 2:12–13: “The *נאום* of the first verse, v. 12 and the first sentence in v. 13, is the only sign that in these poems a prophet is speaking.”⁸ It is only in chs. 3–4 that this alters. “Only here does the prophecy begin for the first time—a description of the Day of Yahweh and the new era which will dawn with it.”⁹

In the following we shall be confining ourselves to Joel 1–2. The caesura after these two chapters is deep enough so that we may be allowed to take the first two chapters as a unity for its own. This does not exclude that Joel 3–4 are to some degree prepared in the first part of the book. The editors who attached the last two chapters did not leave unchanged what was transmitted to them but added their motives and subjects too.

seines Volkes’ (Joel 2,18). Zu Struktur und Komposition von Joel (Teil 2),” *BZ* 53 (2009): 212–37.

7 Maurice Vernes, *Le peuple d’Israel et ses espérances relatives à son avenir depuis les origines jusqu’à l’époque persane* (Paris: Sandoz, 1872), 46–58, called the unity of the book into question, ascribing Joel 1–2 and Joel 3–4 to two different authors. Johann Wilhelm Rothstein in his German translation of Samuel R. Driver, *Einleitung in die Litteratur des alten Testaments* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1896), 333–34, n. 1, took the same position without mentioning Vernes. Later Bernhard Duhm, *Anmerkungen zu den zwölf Propheten* (Gießen: Töpelmann, 1911), 96, moved the division of the book to 2:17/18. See also, for instance, Julius A. Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911), 49–56; Gustav Hölscher, *Die Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Religionsgeschichte Israels* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1914), 430–34; Baumgartner, “Joel 1 und 2”; Theodore H. Robinson (and Friedrich Horst), *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (HAT 1/14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1938), 55; Siegfried Bergler, *Joel als Schriftinterpret* (BEATAJ 16; Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1988). Most recently Jörg Jeremias, *Die Propheten Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha* (ATD 24/3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), VII, who changed his mind, compared with his article in *TRE*.

8 Duhm, *Anmerkungen*, 98.

9 Julius Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten* (4th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 219.

2. The Day of Yahweh (2:1–11)

“From its beginning to its end the book of Joel focuses on one single topic that was common for classical prophecy ever since its beginnings: the ‘Day of Yahweh.’”¹⁰ The core of this topic is to be found in 2:1–11. This is so at least seen from the aspect of tradition history. Here we read a classic theophany description of the kind found similarly at the heart of the book of Zephaniah.¹¹ It is cultic in origin, as becomes clear from the striking parallels in the theophany psalms (Ps 18:8–15; 29:1–5a, 7–8a, 9–10; 77:17–20; 93:1a, 3a, 4, 5b; 97:2a, 3–5; 98:4–6).¹²

¹Blow the horn in Zion; shout on my holy mountain!

All the inhabitants of the earth shall tremble. (cf. v. 10)

For “the Day of Yahweh” is coming, “it is near,” (← Zeph 1:14)

²“a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!” (← Zeph 1:15)

Like dawn, spread upon the mountains, there is a great and powerful people;
its like has never been from of old,
nor will be again “after it” (← v. 3) through the years of all generations.

³Fire devours before it, (cf. Ps 97:3) and after it a flame burns.

The land is like the garden of Eden “before it,
and after it” (← v. a) a desolate steppe.

There is even no escape from it.

⁴Its appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run.

⁵As with the sound of chariots on the tops of the mountains they leap.

“As with the sound” (← v. αα) of a flame of “fire devouring” (← v. 3)
the stubble,
like a mighty people drawn up for battle.

⁶Before it peoples are in anguish, “all faces grow pale.” (← Nah 2:11)

⁷Like warriors “they run,” (← v. 4) like men of war they climb up the wall.

10 Jeremias, “Joel/Joelbuch,” 94; also idem, “The Function of the Book of Joel for Reading the Twelve,” in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve* (ed. R. Albertz, James D. Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle; BZAW 433; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 77–87, esp. 78: “The one and only subject of the book of Joel is the ‘Day of the Lord.’”

11 See Levin, “Zephaniah,” 137–39 (= 280–81).

12 See for short Christoph Levin, “Old Testament Religion: Conflict and Peace,” *AJBI*, vol. 34–36 (Tokyo: The Japanese Biblical Institute, 2008–10), 29–54, esp. 33–42, repr. in *Re-Reading the Scriptures: Essays in the Literary History of the Old Testament* (FAT 87; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 165–81, esp. 168–73. A detailed outline is to be found in Reinhard Müller, *Jahwe als Wettergott: Studien zur althebräischen Kultlyrik anhand ausgewählter Psalmen* (BZAW 387; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008).

They march each on his way, they do not change their courses.

⁸They do not jostle "each" (← v. 7) one another,
each in his path "they march." (← v. 7)

Through the midst of the missiles they attack, they are not halted.

⁹They leap upon the city, "they run" "upon the walls;" (← v. 7)
"they climb up" into the houses, (← v. 7)

through the windows they enter like a thief.

¹⁰**The earth quakes before it, the heavens tremble,** (cf. Ps 77:19)

the sun and the moon are darkened,

and the stars withdraw their shining. (cf. Amos 5:20)

¹¹**Yahweh utters his voice** (cf. Ps 29:3; 68:34; Amos 1:2)

before his army, for his host is exceedingly great;

for he that executes his word is powerful.

"For" the Day of "Yahweh is great and very terrible." (← Ps 96:4)

And who can endure it?

At the beginning is the call to blow the horn at the cultic place in Zion and to raise the battle cry (רוע *hi.*) with which the troops extol the victorious king. Other than in the most immediate parallels Jer 4:5; 6:1, and Hos 5:8, the horn here is neither a warning signal (as it is in Amos 3:6) nor the signal to attack (as in Judg 3:2; 6:34; Jer 51:27 and *passim*); here שופר "horn" and תרועה "battle cry" are the phenomena accompanying the theophany on the Day of Yahweh, this day therefore being called the "day of horn-blast and battle cry," יום שופר ותרועה (Zeph 1:16). The military noise of שופר and תרועה is part of the royal ceremonial which is transferred to the divine king Yahweh on the God's accession to the throne.

The reason for the tumult is the coming of the Day of Yahweh, כִּי־קָרֹב "for the Day of Yahweh is coming, it is near" (v. 1b). This phrase corresponds almost word for word with the announcement in Zeph 1:14, קָרֹב יוֹם־יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל קָרֹב וּמָהֵר מְאֹד "The great Day of Yahweh is near, near and coming very fast." The description of the coming day as it is given in v. 2aα coincides with Zeph 1:15, יוֹם חֹשֶׁךְ וְאֶפְלָה יוֹם עָנָן וְעָרְפָל "a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness." It is generally considered that these phrases have been taken over from the book of Zephaniah.¹³ What speaks especially in favour of this explanation is that Zeph 1:15, for its part, presupposes the interpretation of the Day of Yahweh given to it in the book of Amos, where it is seen as a disastrous event. The phrase יוֹם חֹשֶׁךְ וְאֶפְלָה "a day of darkness and

13 Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 216; Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 126; Duhm, *Anmerkungen*, 97; Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 50, 95; Alfred Jepsen, "Kleine Beiträge zum Zwölfprophetenbuch," *ZAW* 56 (1938): 85–100, esp. 87; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 44; Jeremias, *Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha*, 23–24.

gloom" in Zeph 1:15 repeats Amos 5:18.¹⁴ This means that in Joel 2:1a α , b–2a α we are confronted with the third stage of a sequence in tradition history which can be elucidated only in this way and no other. The word for word borrowing also explains why the divine speech is not continued in v. 1b but that it changes into to a speech *about* Yahweh.

Verses 2a β –3 contain obvious doublets. וְאַחֲרָיו "after it" occurs three times, in twice of them paired with לִפְנֵי "before it." The great and strong army which spread out over the land like the dawn (v. 2a β b), is nothing other than the locust swarm. That becomes clear when v. 3b α establishes: "The land is like the garden of Eden before it, and after it a desolate steppe." In between, it is stated in v. 3a, as follows, אֵשׁ אֵכְלָה אַחֲרָיו וְתֹהֵט לִהְבֶּה "fire devours before it, and after it a flame burns." It has been observed that this last detail does not fit the locusts. What are being described are rather the flashes of lightning which accompany the theophany of the weather god.¹⁵ Ps 97:2a, 3a offers a particularly close parallel: עָנָן וְעָרְפֶּל סְבִיבָיו אֵשׁ לִפְנֵי תִלְדֶּה "clouds and thick darkness are around him, fire goes before him." At the same time this parallel is evidence that Joel 2:2a α and 3a form a direct sequence: "A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. ... Fire devours before it, and after it a flame burns." When the results of the locust swarm are also described in v. 3b α on the pattern of לִפְנֵי "before it" and וְאַחֲרָיו "after it," the way they are described depends on the theophany description. This is an important corrective over against previous research, which considered that the experience of the locust swarm was being interpreted by way of the Day of Yahweh.¹⁶ The reverse is the case: the Day of Yahweh is being illustrated by way of the swarm of locusts

The same can be observed in the text that follows. Between vv. 9 and 10 there is a marked breach. First of all "the preposition with sing. suffix ('before it') at the beginning of the verse has no preceding antecedent, since the verbs in vv. 7–9 are in the plural."¹⁷ Moreover, the tense changes. The description of the locust swarm in vv. 4–9 is largely governed by verbs in the imperfect, whereas in vv. 10–11a the verbs are in the perfect. Wellhausen points out: "The preterites should be not-

14 Levin, "Zephaniah," 132–33 (= 275–76). For the tradition history see Hermann Spieckermann, "Dies irae: Der alttestamentliche Befund und seine Vorgeschichte," in *Gottes Liebe zu Israel* (FAT 33; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 34–46.

15 Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 45.

16 Duhm, *Anmerkungen*, 97–98; Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 50–51; Jepsen, "Kleine Beiträge," 85–87; Otto Plöger, *Theokratie und Eschatologie* (WMANT 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1959), 119.

17 Jeremias, *Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha*, 26.

ed.”¹⁸ What is more, is the substance. “The locusts are partly described in a way which—however much we allow for the poet’s fantasy—excludes the idea that these are real locusts (e.g. 2:10).”¹⁹ “The world-wide horizon, heaven and earth, sun, moon and stars, hardly fits as the original continuation of the description of the locust swarm.”²⁰

Instead, in vv. 10–11 we again have to deal with a classic theophany description. The earthquake, which here even includes the quaking of the heavens, is one of the circumstances accompanying the appearance of the deity in the thunderstorm. This time we find the closest parallel in Ps 77:19: הָאֵירוּ בְּרָקִים תְּבֵל רָגְזָה וַתִּרְעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ “lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook.” This again finds a correspondence in Ps 97:4: הָאֵירוּ בְּרָקָיו תְּבֵל רָאָתָה וַתֵּהֵל הָאָרֶץ “his lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles.” These parallels are evidence of what is already suggested by the tenses: that there is a direct connection between the description of the lightning in v. 3a and the earthquake in v. 10. Apparently there was a firmly established pattern of cause and effect in the theophany descriptions.

Originally the effect was related only to the earth, which rises up towards the coming weather god, in order to receive its fertility through the rain, just as only the earthquake is a real experience. When v. 10aβb expands this appearance to embrace the whole cosmos, the heavens, sun, moon and stars, the original dimensions are overstepped. The fact that the stars lose their shining (נָגַה) is again reminiscent of Amos 5:20, and shows once more that here we have to do with a form of the Day of Yahweh theophany, in which it is developed into a disaster.

Verse 11 adds the thunder to the lightning: וַיְהִי קוֹל יְהוָה וַתֵּן קוֹלוֹ “Yahweh utters his voice.” This corresponds to the natural sequence, just as does the rest of the theophany staging. The well-known parallel text is Ps 29:3–9, but Ps 18:14 and 68:34 should also be mentioned. The following sentences, beginning with לִפְנֵי הָיָלוֹ “before his army,” again switch over to the warriors, but in v. 11b the theophany theme finds its end: כִּי־גָדוֹל יוֹם־יְהוָה וְנוֹרָא מְאֹד “for the Day of Yahweh is great and very terrible.” This sentence has been taken over from Ps 96:4 and has been applied to the Day of Yahweh: כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד נוֹרָא הוּא עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים “for Yahweh is great and very much to be praised, he is terrible above all gods.” Since

18 Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 217.

19 Hölscher, *Die Propheten*, 430.

20 Jepsen, “Kleine Beiträge,” 86.

Ps 96:4 is itself a secondary variation on Ps 48:2,²¹ there can be no doubt about the literary dependence.

As the result of this first examination, the following text emerges:

¹תקעו שופר בציון והריעו בהר קדשי
 כִּי־בא יום־יהוה כי קרוב:
²יום חשך ואפלה יום ענן וערפל
³לִפְנֵי אֶפְלָה אֵשׁ וְאַחֲרָיו תִּלְהֹט לִהְבָּה
¹⁰לִפְנֵי רָגְזָה אֶרֶץ רָעָשׁוּ שָׁמַיִם
 שָׁמֶשׁ וְיָרֵחַ קָדְרוּ וְכּוֹכְבִּים אָסְפוּ נְגִהָם:
¹¹וַיִּהְיֶה נָתַן קוֹלֹ
 כִּי־גָדֹל יום־יהוה וְנוֹרָא מְאֹד

¹Blow the horn in Zion; shout on my holy mountain! [...]

for the Day of Yahweh is coming, it is near,

²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! [...]

³Fire devours before it, and after it a flame burns. [...]

¹⁰The earth quakes before it, the heavens tremble,
 the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

¹¹Yahweh utters his voice. [...]

For the Day of Yahweh is great and very terrible. [...]

It is evident that essential elements of its wording have been borrowed from the book of Zephaniah. About that scholars have long agreed.²² What is new is that on the basis of the parallels in the psalms it is possible to arrive at a coherent description of the theophany which once formed the literary basis for the section. The dependence on Zephaniah goes together with a reinterpretation of the Day of Yahweh theophany in the sense of an event which is threatening rather than full of blessing; this can first be seen in Amos 5:18–20 and it has visibly influenced Zeph 1:15. In Joel 2, seen in this light, we already find ourselves on a third stage in tradition history. The cosmic dimension has markedly expanded, although here, too, the original form of the presentation can still

21 See Charles A. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 2 (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1907), 300; Jörg Jeremias, *Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen* (FRLANT 141; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 125 ("The quotations of Ps 93:1 in v. 10 and of Ps 48:2 in v. 4a are evident."); and many others.

22 See above n. 13. Over and above Zephaniah (and Amos), scholars see the book of Joel dependent on Isa 13, see esp. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 47; Jörg Jeremias, "Der 'Tag Jahwes' in Jes 13 und Joel 2," in *Schriftauslegung in der Schrift: Festschrift für Odil Han-nes Steck* (ed. R. G. Kratz, Thomas Krüger, and Konrad Schmid; BZAW 300; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 129–38. However, I could not find any positive argument brought forward in favor of it. Because the book of Joel is evidently late it seems to be taken as a matter of course that literary identities and similarities are quotations on Joel's side. But Isaiah 13 is also very late and, moreover, a composite text.

very well be seen. The coming of the deity at his day counts still as a salvific event for which people are yearning. The parallels to the theophany psalms are striking.

3. Locusts and Warriors (2:2aβb, 3bα, 5aβγb, 7)

The connection between the Day of Yahweh theophany and the description of a catastrophe caused by locusts should not be interpreted to mean that the details of the natural event have derived from the theophany description. In this respect the conclusion of earlier research, namely that the description of the locusts provides the basis of the text, remains valid.²³ There are signs that the account of the locusts rests on a *Vorlage* of its own. However this has not been preserved in complete form, and the individual fragments which can be isolated on the grounds of their poetical form do not cohere convincingly.

In the context of 2:1–11, we can detect a fragment of this kind in v. 4–5αα:

כַּמֵּרְאָה סוּסִים מֵרָאֵהוּ
וּכְפָרְשִׁים כֵּן יִרְצִיּוּן
קָוֹל מֵרֶכְבוֹת [עַל־רָאשֵׁי הַהָרִים] יִרְקְדוּן

Its appearance is like the appearance of horses,
and like war horses they run.

As with the sound of chariots [on the tops of the mountains] they leap.

The three lines (except the obvious expansion in the last line) constitute a poetical fragment which can be read in the metre 3+3+3. The first line is a nominal clause, the second and third lines are verbal clauses in the imperfect which form a synonymous *parallelismus membrorum*. Taken together, the three lines provide a threefold comparison for the locusts; their appearance, their speed, and the noise they make are compared with an army of chariots.

Since the reference in the first line is only suggested by way of suffixes, something must have preceded. But judging by the poetical form, this cannot have been the text that precedes today. Moreover, it would seem that the expansions to be observed in vv. 2aβb und 3bα were added at the same time when the fragment vv. 4–5αα came in:

23 See esp. Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 50–51; Duhm, *Anmerkungen*, 97; Hölscher, *Die Propheten*, 433; Jepsen, “Kleine Beiträge,” 86; Plöger, *Theokratie und Eschatologie*, 119.

Like dawn, spread upon the mountains, there is a great and powerful people; its like has never been from of old, nor will be again after it through the years of all generations. ...

The land is like the garden of Eden before it, and after it a desolate steppe.

The storm of the locusts is now equated with the coming of the Day of Yahweh. In v. 5a α the expansion עַל־רָאשֵׁי הַהָרִים "on the tops of the mountains" was probably added by the same hand, as in v. 2b the locusts spread עַל־הַהָרִים "upon the mountains." The addition disturbs the parallelism, and stands in the wrong position in the sentence. According to Duhm, the verb יִרְקְדוּן "should follow מַרְכָּבוֹת."²⁴

Having been connected with the theophany, the description of the locusts was thoroughly changed. The image of the comparison, i.e., the army of chariots, changed its role, now becoming the subject. The locusts depart from the scene. Instead the hostile army is described in ever greater detail.

As with the sound of a flame of fire devouring the stubble (קָוֹל לֵהֵב אֵשׁ (אֶכְלָה קָשׁ), like a mighty people drawn up for battle. ... Like warriors they run, like men of war they climb up the wall. They march each on his way, they do not change their courses.

The link in v. 5a β b by which the expansion is attached to the former text provides a synthesis of the theophany in v. 3a (לִפְנֵי אֶכְלָה אֵשׁ וְאֶחָרֵיו (תִּלְהֹט לְהַבָּה) and of the locusts in v. 5a α (קָוֹל). This forms no appropriate combination. Noise is not a characteristic of fire. Duhm supposes that קוֹל "sound" has been "repeated by mistake."²⁵ But even if the catchword קָוֹל does not fit the devouring flames, it is essential for the link. Verse 7 develops the description further. Instead of the locusts we now have warriors who storm the walls.

4. The Locust Storm (1:1–20)

The conclusion that the fragment in 2:4–5a α derives from an already existing context which has today been either overlaid or lost, finds its confirmation in Joel 1. Here we find fragments of a similar artistic and poetical form which describe a plague of locusts, too.

24 Duhm, *Anmerkungen*, 98.

25 Ibid.

¹The word of Yahweh that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel:

²Hear this, you aged men, give ear, all inhabitants of the land!
Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers?

³Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children,
and their children another generation.

⁴*What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten.
What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten,
and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten.*²⁶

⁵Awake, you drunkards, and weep;
and wail, all you drinkers of wine,
because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth.

⁶For a nation "has come up" against my "land," (← Jer 4:7)
powerful and without number;
its teeth are the teeth of a "lion" (← Jer 4:7),
and it has the fangs of a lioness.

⁷"It has laid waste" (← Jer 4:7) my "vine," (← v. 12)
and splintered my "fig tree;" (← v. 12)
it has stripped it bare and cast it away;
its twigs are made white.

⁸<Lament> like a virgin girded with sackcloth because of the husband of
her youth.

⁹The cereal offering and the drink offering
"are cut off from" (← v. 5) the house of Yahweh.
"<Mourn>," (← v. 10) O priests, the ministers of Yahweh.

¹⁰*The fields are laid waste, the ground mourns;*
because "the grain" (← Deut 11:14) "is laid waste," (← v. a) the wine
(← Deut 11:14) "withers," (← v. 12) the oil (← Deut 11:14) "languishes."
(← v. 12)

¹¹Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil, wail, O vinedressers,
for the wheat and the barley;
because the harvest of the "field" (← v. 10) has perished.

¹²*The vine withers, the fig tree languishes.*

Pomegranate, even palm, and apple

all the trees of the field

are withered.

For joy "withers" (← v. 12a) away from the sons of men.

¹³Gird on sackcloth and lament, O priests, wail, O ministers of the
altar.

Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God!
For cereal offering and drink offering are withheld from the house
of your God.

¹⁴Sanctify a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly.

26 There is an exhaustive debate on the different designations of the locusts, which does not matter here, see Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 27–28.

Gather the elders

all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of Yahweh your God;
and cry out to Yahweh.

¹⁵Alas for the day! "For the Day of Yahweh is near," (← Zeph 1:7)

and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

¹⁶Is not the food cut off before our eyes,
joy and rejoicing from the house of our God?

¹⁷*The seed shrivels under their clods,*

the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are ruined

because "the grain" (← Deut 11:14) "has withered." (← v. 12)

¹⁸*How the beasts groan!*

The herds of cattle stray about because there is no pasture for them.

Even the flocks of sheep <"are desolate">.²⁷ (← v. 17)

¹⁹Unto you, Yahweh, I cry.

For "fire has devoured" (← 2:3) the pastures of the steppe,
and "flame has burned" (← 2:3) all the trees of the field.

²⁰Even the beasts of the field "long for you" (← Ps 42:2)
because "the water brooks" have dried up, (← Ps 42:2)

and "fire has devoured the pastures of the steppe." (← v. 19)

The first of the original fragments is v. 4. In three lines, in four-stress metre (4+4+4), four different kinds of locusts are linked, rising to a climax. The step for step increase of the disaster reminds on sayings such as Isa 24:18a; Amos 5:3, and Amos 5:19. Unlike Joel 2:4–5aα, this time the verbs are in the perfect: the locust swarm has passed, and now there is famine. According to the sequence of events, the verse is in the wrong place. The description of the locust swarm in 2:4–5aα should come first. Apparently the fragments became confused when they were linked with the theophany description.

On the basis of the metre this fragment can be supplemented from parts of the following. Verse 10a can also be read as a double-two or four-stress unit, as can vv. 12a and 12b, provided that the asyndetically added expansion *הַשָּׂדֵה הָעֵצִי כָל־עֵץ* "all the trees of the field" is left out.²⁸ This unit also comprises three lines. The same metre can be found for the last time in v. 17a, although there only in two lines. Finally, on the basis of the content, v. 18a might also be attributed to the original poem. All in all, the following emerges:

27 Read with the Septuagint ἡφανίσθησαν = נִשְׁמַד as in v. 17. MT אָשַׁם *ni*. "suffer punishment."

28 Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, 121; Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 82.

וְיָתֵר הַגִּזְם אָכַל הָאֲרָבָה⁴
וְיָתֵר הָאֲרָבָה אָכַל הַזֵּלֶק
וְיָתֵר הַזֵּלֶק אָכַל הַחֲסִיל [...] ^{f1}
שָׂדֵד שָׂדֵה אֲבֵלָה אֲדָמָה [...] ^{f1}
הַגֶּפֶן הַזֵּיטָה וְהַתְּאֵנָה אֲמָלָה¹²
רִמּוֹן גַּם־תְּמָר וְתַפּוּחַ [...] יִבְשׁוּ [...] ^{f1}
עֲבָשׂוּ פְּרָדוֹת תַּחַת מְגֵרַפְתֵּיהֶם¹¹
נִשְׁמָו אֲצִרוֹת נְהָרָסוּ מִמְּגֵרוֹת [...] ^{f1}
מֶה־נִּצְנָחָה בְּהֵמָה¹¹
נִבְכוּ עֲדָרֵי בָקָר כִּי אֵין מְרֻעָה לָהֶם

⁴What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten.

What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten,
and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. [...]

¹⁰The fields are laid waste, the ground mourns; [...]

¹²The vine withers, the fig tree languishes.

Pomegranate, even palm, and apple [...] are withered. [...]

¹⁷The seed shrivels under their clods,
the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are ruined. [...]

¹⁸How the beasts groan!

The herds of cattle stray about because there is no pasture for them.

This result speaks again for itself: The poem gives a coherent description of the land after it was devastated by a storm of locusts.

Other than in 2:1–11, the basis of 1:4–10 is not the description of the theophany supplemented by the motif of the locust swarm; here, conversely, the description of the locusts is the basis. This has later been related to the theophany, as will be shown below. The contrary direction of the textual levels could be explained by some kind of documentary hypothesis. Two independent poems, the one related to the Day of Yahweh, the other to a storm of locusts, have been linked with each other.

5. Call to Lamentation (1:5, 8, 11, 14*)

On a later level in 1:4–20, we find a new element which is missing in 2:1–11, the call to lamentation. These parts of the text are also poetically formed. What is strange is the addressee of the calls. In v. 5 it is the friends of the wine, who are now supposed to lament:

Awake, you drunkards, and weep;
and wail, all you drinkers of wine,
because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth.

This motif has perhaps been chosen because wine counted as the quintessence of joy in life. In v. 8, the feminine imperative אָלִי from the Aramaic root אלה II “lament”²⁹ should probably be read as a plural אָלֵי.³⁰

Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth because of the husband of her youth.

Here the marriage ceremony offers a further image: It cannot take place because all joy has disappeared from the land. In v. 11 (where the verbs have to be read as imperatives) it is the tillers of the soil and the wine growers who are called to lament:

Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil, wail, O vinedressers,
for the wheat and the barley;
because the harvest of the field has perished.

Since the reason given touches only on the loss of the grain, we can see that this already presupposes the earlier text stratum, which in v. 12 complains that the vines have withered. The series of these appeals leads on in v. 14 to the call for a ceremony of repentance. Once the additions כל יִשְׁבֵּי הָאָרֶץ “all the inhabitants of the land” and בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם “to the house of Yahweh your God” have been omitted, this can be read as a double-four unit:

קִדְּשׁוּ צוֹם קִרְאוּ עֲצָרָה
אִסְפוּ זִקְנִים וְיִעֲקֹב אֱלֹהֵיהֶם

Sanctify a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly.
Gather the elders and cry out to Yahweh.

What the analysis brings to the fore is the initial part of a lamentation ceremony. The question arises whether and where the ceremony continues. Therefore, before we will look still closer at ch. 1 let us observe what happens in 2:21–27. There it is said that the cry to Yahweh was answered.

6. The Salvation Oracle (2:21–27)

“Verse 21–23(24) is generally viewed today as a later addition, because here the rescue seems to be presupposed as having already hap-

29 See Max Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch* (BZAW 96; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966), 24 (No. 15). The Hebrew equivalent is ילל hi.

30 Thus Duhm, *Anmerkungen*, 96.

pened.”³¹ This is an error, which arises from the fact that later 2:12–20 has been interpolated, as will be shown below. Actually, in 2:21–27 we have the earliest part of the prophecy of salvation in the book of Joel. “Full of light, they are the necessary counter-picture to the call to lament in ch. 1.”³² The salvation oracle did not have an introduction of its own, nor did it require one. In other prophetic books, too, disaster and salvation directly follow one another, without a narrative element such as vv. 18 and 19 being needed.

²¹Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, (cf. Ps 97:1)

for “Yahweh has done great things!” (← Ps 126:3)

²²Fear not, you “beasts of the field,” (1:20)

for “the pastures of the steppe” (1:20) are green;

for the tree bears its fruit,

“the fig tree and vine” (← 1:12) give their full yield.

²³O sons of Zion, “be glad and rejoice” (← v. 21) in Yahweh, your God;

for “he has given” (← Deut 11:14) for you

“the early rain” (← v. b) for vindication,

he has poured down “for you” (← v. a) shower,

“the early and the latter rain,” (← Deut 11:14) as before.

²⁴The threshing floors shall be full of grain,

the vats shall overflow with “wine and oil.” (← Deut 11:14)

²⁵I will restore to you the years

which “the swarming locust has eaten,

the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,” (← 1:4)

my great army, which I sent among you,

²⁶so that you shall eat

eat and be sated, (← Deut 11:15)

and praise the name of Yahweh your God, who has dealt wondrously with you.

And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,

and that I, Yahweh, am your God, and no one else.

“And my people shall never again be put to shame.” (← v. 26)

The oracle of salvation begins in typical fashion with the reassurance formula *אַל-תִּירָא* “fear not.” The addressee is the *אֲדָמָה* whose grief was described in 1:10a and which is now supposed to be transformed into joy: *גִּילִי וְשִׂמְחִי* “be glad and rejoice.” The verb pair belongs in tradition history to the context of Yahweh’s accession. “The calls to jubilation

31 Baumgartner, “Joel 1 und 2,” 16, referring to Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 218; Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 108; Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 113; and Karl Budde, “Der Umschwung in Joel 2,” *OLZ* 22 (1919): 104–10, esp. 109.

32 Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, 133.

and joy ... are in accordance with the royal ritual.”³³ Yahweh’s kingdom is founded on his victory over chaos and distress: “for Yahweh has done great things.” That means that here again we are back on the thematic level of the Day of Yahweh—but now seen from its salvific side. The statement is in agreement with Ps 126:3, and not by chance: הַגְדִּיל יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הֵייוֹנוּ שְׂמֵחִים “Yahweh has done great things for us, and we rejoice.” In Ps 126 too the jubilation is related to the return of the water and the certainty of harvest.

In v. 22a the reassurance formula is repeated and addressed to the wild animals. This is not the original sequence. Nowack has rightly observed: “The reason ... given does not really fit v. 22a, for even if some animals feed from the fruits of the trees, the author is undoubtedly thinking of human beings ...; the final element makes that clear.”³⁴ Only humans eat figs and drink wine. It is fairly clear from this that v. 22b is the original continuation of v. 21:

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice,
for Yahweh has done great things,
for the tree bears its fruit,
the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

This promise balances out the lament in 1:12a, which there belongs to the earliest textual level.

Verse 24a shows itself to be continuing the original salvation oracle:³⁵ Whereas vv. 21 and 22b tell that the trees will again give their fruits, now the fruits of the תְּבֵנִים are named, its fertility being renewed: The threshing floors shall again be filled with grain so that the people will be sated. Therefore the tense changes from perfect, as it was in v. 22b, to perfect. cons. The logical continuation is to be found in v. 26:

The threshing floors shall be full of grain, [...]
so that you shall eat [...] and praise the name of Yahweh your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you.

The people will answer with the praise of Yahweh, whose desire it is to help through his wondrous acts.

33 Müller, *Jahwe als Wettergott*, 99.

34 Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 108.

35 The verse is rightly judged by Jeremias, *Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha*, 38, as being “stylistically superfluous.” There can be two reasons for: either the verse itself, or its context. As vv. 23 and 25 are later insertions, the latter is the case here.

7. Call to Repentance (2:12–20)

In the sequence of the book in its current form, the salvation oracle is preceded by an emphatic call to repentance on which it answers. As this passage is written in prose, it disrupts the artistic and poetical form of the earlier text. What is noticeable here is the reference to other books in the Dodekapropheton, namely to the books of Amos and Jonah. This is different from the other parts of the book of Joel.

¹²“Yet even” (← Amos 4:6, 7) now, “says Yahweh, return to me” (← Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11) “with all your heart,” (← Deut 10:13) with fasting (cf. Jonah 3:5), with weeping, and with mourning. ¹³Rend your heart and not your garments (cf. Jonah 3:5–6, 8), and return to Yahweh, your God (cf. Jonah 3:8), for he is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil.” (← Jonah 4:2) ¹⁴“Who knows whether he will not turn and repent,” (← Jonah 3:9)

and leave a blessing behind him, a cereal-offering and a drink-offering for Yahweh, your God?

¹⁵“Blow the horn in Zion,” (← 2:1) “sanctify a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly.” (← 1:14) ¹⁶“Gather” the people, “sanctify” the congregation, assemble “the elders.” “Gather” (← 1:14) the children, even those sucking at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of Yahweh, weep.

Let them say, Spare (cf. Jonah 4:11) your people, Yahweh, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations.

“Why should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?” (← Ps 79:10) ¹⁸Then Yahweh became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

¹⁹Yahweh answered and said to his people, Behold, I am sending to you “grain, wine, and oil,” (← Deut 11:14) and you “will be sated” (← Deut 11:15); and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. (cf. Ezek 36:30)

²⁰I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear-guard into the western sea; his stench shall rise, and his foul smell shall rise, “for he has done great things.” (← v. 21)

The beginning in v. 12 should be taken literally: וְגַם-עַתָּה “yet even now.” It refers to an earlier occasion in which there was also a call to repentance. The phrase “return to me” is not, as is usual (and as in the following v. 13) שָׁבוּ אֵלַי but שָׁבוּ עָדַי. We find the only other instance of this form in the five-fold refrain in Amos 4: וְלֹא-שָׁבְתֶם עָדַי נְאֻם-יְהוָה “yet you did not return to me, says Yahweh” (vv. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11). The formula for the divine saying נְאֻם-יְהוָה “says Yahweh,” which we meet here for the only

time in the book of Joel, makes the reference completely unequivocal.³⁶ Yahweh concedes afresh, וְגַם-עַתָּה “yet even now,” the possibility of repentance, an opportunity which the Israelites rejected five times in the time of Amos. We should also note that the first two plagues in Amos 4 are introduced in each case with וְגַם “yet even” (vv. 6, 7). Three of these five plagues consisted of drougth and famine. The famine in the book of Joel is now incorporated into this series. In effect it is interpreted as a measure undertaken by Yahweh with the intention of bringing the people back to him.

The repentance shows itself in fasting, weeping, and lamentation. Here another model plays a part: the repentance of the Ninevites in Jonah 3. The formula of grace, חֲנּוּן וְרַחוּם אָרַךְ אַפִּים וְרַב-חֶסֶד “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,”³⁷ which is the basis of the call for repentance, is expanded here by the phrase וְנָחַם עַל-הָרָעָה “and repents of evil,” just as it is a single other time in Jonah 4:2. Since in Jonah 4 Yahweh’s grace and mercy depends on his remorse, which is caused by the repentance of the Ninevites in Jonah 3:10,³⁸ this unequivocally establishes the priority of the book of Jonah.³⁹ This is also confirmed by the consideration of v. 14 מִי יוֹדֵעַ יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם “who knows whether he will not turn and repent,” which has been taken over from the king of Nineveh’s speech in Jonah 3:9. Other than in the book of Jonah, in Joel 2:13 the formula of grace precedes this consideration. This means that Yahweh’s remorse is no longer expected to be the result of his equalizing justice as is the case in Jonah 3:10 (and in its *Vorlage* Jer 18:7–10), but rather to depend on his grace, as in the (later added) objection of the prophet in Jonah 4:2.

36 Bergler, *Joel als Schriftinterpret*, 73; Jeremias, *Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha*, 29.

37 Exod 34:6; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8; Neh 9:17, 31; 2 Chr 30:9; cf. Exod 22:26; Deut 4:31; Ps 78:38; 116:5.

38 The core of the book of Jonah which is to be found in Jonah 1:1–2; 3:3a, 4b–5, 10 is no other than a narrative application of the theology of history theorem in Jer 18:7–10, see Christoph Levin, “Jona 1: Bekehrung zum Judentum und ihre Folgen,” in *Die unwiderstehliche Wahrheit: Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie für A. Meinhold* (ed. R. Lux and E.-J. Waschke; ABG 23; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006), 283–99, esp. 283–84, repr. in idem, *Verheißung und Rechtfertigung: Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament II* (BZAW 431; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 276–92, esp. 276–77. Jer 18:7–10 is the earliest biblical reference of the motive of Yahweh’s remorse (נָחַם ni.).

39 Jonathan Magonet, *Form and Meaning: Studies in Literary Techniques in the Book of Jonah* (BBET 2; Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1976), 77–79; Bergler, *Joel als Schriftprophet*, 213–45. More recently most scholars see Jonah depending on Joel, see, e.g., Jeremias, *Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha*, 107. But see Hermann Spieckermann, “Barmherzig und gnädig ist der Herr ...,” in *Gottes Liebe zu Israel*, 3–19, esp. 17 n. 41

Jonah 3 tells about the repentance of non-Jews. This is different in Joel 2:13a. Therefore unlike the inhabitants of Nineveh, the Israelites are not told to return from their evil ways (שוב איש מדרך הרעה); they are told to return to Yahweh their God (ושובו אל-יהוה אלהיכם). The call to repentance was also changed: וקרעו לבבכם ואל-בגדיכם "rend your hearts – and not your garments," that means: other than the Ninevites did according to Jonah 3:5 who put on sackcloth. The catchword לבבכם is the same as in v. 12: "return to me *with all your heart* (בכל-לבבכם)." This is unmistakably a hint to the *Sh'ma*. What is more: The 2. pers. plural is a literal reference to the variant of the *Sh'ma* to be found in Deut 11:13–15:

If you will obey my commandments which I command you this day, to love Yahweh your God, and to serve him with all your heart (בכל-לבבכם) and with all your soul, I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain (יורה ומלקוש), that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil (והגנה ותירשך וצחקך); and I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be sated (ושבעת).

The return of the rain depends on the people's return to Yahweh. The command for love in Deut 11:13 also explains why Yahweh's first-person address of Joel 2:12 changes over into a speech *about* Yahweh in v. 13.

The interpretation arrived at through these references applies through vv. 15–16 to the ceremony of repentance which was proclaimed in 1:14*. The invitation אקפו זקנים "gather the elders" is repeated from there word for word, but is expanded to אקפועם קדשו קהל קבצו זקנים "gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders." The whole of God's people is to come together for the ceremony of repentance. As well as the elders, the "children and nursing infants" are also mentioned. The call to bridegroom and bride to emerge from their rooms (v. 16b) underlines with particular emphasis that the situation has brought joy in life to an end (cf. Jer 16, 9; 7:34; 25:10; 33:11); perhaps too sexual abstinence should be included in the penitential rites. "It was really the case that on the day of repentance great importance was attached to as complete an attendance as possible."⁴⁰ For this, v. 15a takes up the blowing of the shofar from 2:1, which here too is not interpreted as an alarm signal but as a call to the cultic ceremony – rightly so, as we saw above.

The call to repentance itself follows in v. 17ba and is again related to Jonah 4: "Let them say, Spare your people, Yahweh (חוסה יהוה), and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the

40 Baumgartner, "Joel 1 und 2," 15.

nations." For in Jonah 4:11 Yahweh asked Jonah: וְאֵנִי לֹא אָחוּס עַל־יְנִינָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה "And I, should I not spare Nineveh, the great city." If Yahweh spares Nineveh but punishes his own people, they will become an object of derision among the non-Jews. We should note that it is the people who come together in v. 16 and who in v. 17b pray that they be spared. The motif of being shamed among the nations is widespread in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer 24:9; 29:18; 42:18; 44:8; Ezek 5:14; 22:4), where it is related to the dispersion in the diaspora.

The answer to the plea follows in v. 19, now in narrative style though certainly without a description of the more precise circumstances. Yahweh turns directly to the lamenting people (לְעַמּוֹ). In the *futurum instans* הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ "behold, I am sending," he announces the imminent turn to salvation: He sends again "grain, wine and oil" (הַדֶּגֶן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ וְהַיֶּצֶקֶר)⁴¹ so that the people will be sated (וַיִּשְׂבְּעוּהֶם). In this way the promise of Deut 11 is fulfilled by word: "If you will obey my commandments ... you will be sated." At the same time, Yahweh proves his power, which the Israelites according to Hos 2:10 have called in question, "that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil" (הַדֶּגֶן וְהַתִּירוֹשׁ וְהַיֶּצֶקֶר). With the demonstration of his power, Yahweh at the same time ends the humiliation of his people among the nations (הָרָפָה) (בְּגוֹיִם). The closest parallel is Ezek 36:30: "I will make the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field abundant, so that you may never again suffer the reproach of famine among the nations (תִּרְפַּת רָעָב בְּגוֹיִם)."

8. Salvation Follows Repentance (1:1–3, 10b, 17b; 2:23*, 24b, 26aα*)

The narrative in 2:19: וַיַּעַן יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר לְעַמּוֹ "Yahweh answered and said to his people," makes the description in 1:4–2:11 to be read a cast back to the dire situation which has now been surmounted. The actual lamentation is to become part of a narrative. This being so, today's version can begin in 1:2 with a call to hear and pass on what has been heard, שְׁמַע־זֹאת וְהֶאֱזִינוּ "hear this and give ear." The rhetorical question: "Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers?" shows that the speaker means to describe an extraordinary event that

41 This triad is to be found Deut 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:33; 18:4; 28:51; Jer 31:12; Hos 2:10, 24; Joel 2:19; Hag 1:11; Neh 5:11; 10:40; 13:5, 12; 2 Chr 31:5; 32:28. For the religion-historical background see Udo Rüterswörden, "Vom Numen zum Nomen," in *Gott – Götter – Götzen: XIV. Europäischer Kongress für Theologie* (ed. Ch. Schwöbel; VWGT 38; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013), 282–91.

already belongs to the past. At the same time it presupposes that this event has been a saving one, irrespective of the situation described at the beginning of the book. It has become part of salvation history—and an example for future generations.

This again is in accordance with Deut 11, namely with the first part of the chapter (vv. 1–12) which recollects Yahweh's saving deeds in Egypt and on the wandering in the desert which are to be transmitted in order to exhort the people to keep Yahweh's commandments. This is what is meant by the plea in Joel 1:3 that listeners should themselves pass on what they themselves have heard, and make it part of tradition: "Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." Therefore it seems reasonable that the actual beginning of the book of Joel goes back to the same author who also inserted 2:12–20.

This may also include the book's heading "the word of Yahweh that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel." The form of the heading conforms exactly to the headings introducing the books of Hosea, Micah, and Zephaniah, and to some degree the books of Jeremiah and Amos, too. Only the dating is missing. The common form marks the book of Joel as being an integral part of the *corpus propheticum*. Moreover, as the content of the single books is equally characterized as "word of Yahweh,"⁴² this means that the books of the prophets are identical by their very substance. They differ only in regard of the person who proclaims the message. Because 2:12–19 depends to a large degree not only on Deut 11 but also on Amos 4 and Jonah 3–4 it seems highly probable that the heading goes back to the same author, or at least to the same step in the reworking of the book.

Traces of the same editor can also be found in the other parts of the book. The salvation as it is announced in 2:19 meets precisely the distress complained about in 1:10b:

Because the grain is laid waste (שָׂדֶה), the wine withers (הַכִּיֹּשֶׁה), the oil languishes (אֶמְלֵל).

This statement is not original on its place but was subsequently added to v. 10a. This becomes evident by the repetitive connection כִּי שָׂדֶה. The phrase repeats what is said in v. 10a (שָׂדֶה) and v. 12 (הַכִּיֹּשֶׁה ... אֶמְלֵל) in

42 On the history of the term "word of Yahweh" see Christoph Levin, "The 'Word of Yahweh': A Theological Concept in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. M. H. Floyd and R. D. Haak; OTS 427; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 42–62, repr. in *Re-Reading the Scriptures: Essays in the Literary History of the Old Testament* (FAT 87; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 223–45.

order to apply it to the triad “grain, wine, and oil” (דגן תירוש ויצהר). Deut 11:13–15 is again in the background. This means: the drought goes back to disobedience towards Yahweh, no other as it was threatened by Deut 11:16–17. In Joel 1:17b attention is again drawn to the loss of grain:

Because the grain has withered (הוביש),

thus making disobedience the reason for the complaint of v. 17a.

It was a matter of consequence that the salvation oracle in 2:21–27 was enlarged in the same way in order to make it Yahweh’s salvific reaction to the people’s return to him. Again the additions are to be recognized as they refer to Deut 11:13–15. This is most evident in v. 23:

O sons of Zion, be glad and rejoice (גילו ושמחו) in Yahweh, your God; for he has given for you [...] the early and the latter rain (מורה ומלקוש) [...] as before.

The invitation “be glad and rejoice” takes up what in v. 21 was said to the land and transfers it to the inhabitants of Zion, that means to those who according to 2:15 have repented. Now the salvation is materialized according to the promise in Deut 11:14: “I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain (יורה ומלקוש).” The return of the rain is said to have been a restoration of the earlier status (“as before”), as it was before the people have turned away from Yahweh. As a result, not only the threshing floors shall be full of grain (כר), i.e., the fruit of the earth, as it was said in v. 24a but also the trees shall give their fruits, so that

the vats shall overflow with wine and oil (תירוש ויצהר, v. 24b),

thus completing the triad of the fruits promised in Deut 11:14. In v. 26 to the promise: “You shall eat ... and praise the name of Yahweh your God, who has dealt wondrously with you,” an allusion to Deut 11:15 was secondarily added: אכול ושבוע “eat and be sated.” The salvation oracle is now in accordance with Yahweh’s answer in 2:19.

9. The Distress of the Priests (1:9, 13, 14aγ, 16; 2:14b, 17a)

On a later level, the appeal to the priests to lament the loss of cereal and drink offerings has joined the call for lamentation. This is clearly an ulterior motive. It refers to a dilemma which evidently weighed heavily on the priesthood of the Second Temple. In order to avert the disaster of the drought, intercession with Yahweh was required, as is ordered in 1:14; and yet the tamid offering must not be interrupted, which now has come true. “How terrible a misfortune the cessation of the daily

sacrifices was considered is plain from Dn. 8¹¹ 11³¹ 12¹¹ and esp. from Josephus who tells us that they were not omitted even in times of siege."⁴³ It is a vicious circle if the very means which was intended to help to avert the distress is destroyed through that very distress itself.

The type of association can best be grasped in 1:9, which in substance joins on to v. 5. If the wine-drinkers are supposed to lament "because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth" (עַל-עֵסֶם כִּי (נִכְרַת מִפִּיכֶם, v. 5), this means for the writer of v. 9 that "the cereal offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of Yahweh" (הַכֶּרֶת מִנֶּחֱה (וְנִסְדָּ מִבֵּית יְהוָה). Consequently the form אָבְלוּ, which the Masoretes vocalized as a perfect because of v. 10, should be read as an imperative אָבְלוּ "mourn," following the Septuagint.⁴⁴

In 1:13 the call to the priests is emphasized still more. With this addition, the call to the ceremony of lamentation which follows in v. 14 is now especially directed to the priesthood. The priests are not only to fast like everyone else; more: they are told to sleep in sackcloth. In v. 14אָבְלוּ אֲלֵהֶיכֶם בֵּית יְהוָה "to the house of Yahweh your God" is now added. It relates the lamentation ceremony explicitly to the temple. The question in 1:16, introduced by הֲלוֹא "is not" (which rhetorically expects an affirmative answer) justifies the cry of lament with distress over the fact that the sacrificial ceremonies in the temple can no longer take place.

Consequently the call to repentance in 2:12-17 too has been related to the priests. In 2:17a the servants of Yahweh, who perform their services in the forecourt of the temple between vestibule and altar, are called separately to lamentation. As a result the lamentation in v. 17b now becomes the vicarious prayer of the priests, in marked contrast to the considerable emphasis in 2:15-16a that the whole people should come together in penitence. In complete correspondence with this, the expectation in 2:14: "Who knows whether he will not turn and repent" (which has been taken over from Jonah 3:9), is now related to the restoration of the tamid offering (Exod 29:38-41; Lev 6:13; Ezek 46:14-15): "a cereal-offering and a drink-offering for Yahweh, your God?" When the restoration of the land's fertility is expressed in the phrase שָׂאֵר אַחֲרָיו "leave a blessing behind him," this is perhaps a way of balancing out 2:3bα: וְאַחֲרָיו מִדְּבַר שְׁמָמָה "and after him a desolate steppe."

43 Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 81. See Josephus, *B.J.* VI 2,1.

44 Baumgartner, "Joel 1 und 2," 11. See also the tentative reconstruction by Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 18 note i.

10. The Enemy from the North ... (1:6–7, 12b α^* , b, 14a β^* , 15, 18b, 19b)

In the present shape of the book of Joel, the drought and famine brought about by the locusts are described in terms of a military attack by a foreign army threatening the land from the north. The lamentation is caused by both, a natural as well as a military catastrophe. The locusts are depicted as the enemy from the north, and vice versa the enemy is given the figure of the storm of locusts.

The first expansion of this kind is to be found in 1:6–7. The link in substance between v. 9 and v. 5 makes evident that the further description of the dire situation has been interpolated later. The double כִּי “for” in vv. 5b and 6 also shows that vv. 6–7 have been added:

For a nation has come up (עָלָה) against my land (אֶרֶץ),
powerful and without number;
its teeth are the teeth of a lion (אֶרֶץ),
and it has the fangs of a lioness.
It has laid waste (שָׁם לְשָׁמָה) my vine,
and splintered my fig tree;
it has stripped it bar and cast it away;
its twigs branches are made white.

Siegfried Bergler and Jörg Jeremias have convincingly shown that here the songs about the enemy from the north in the book of Jeremiah have been definitive.⁴⁵ The closest parallel is to be found in Jer 4:7:

A lion has gone up (עָלָה אֶרֶץ) from his thicket,
a destroyer of nations has set out;
he has gone forth from his place
to make your land a waste (לְשִׁמּוֹם אֶרֶץְךָ לְשָׁמָה);
your cities will be ruins without inhabitant.

The sudden and unexpected use of the first-person-speech has also been taken from the prophet's lament in Jeremiah. The destruction of vine and fig tree which according to v. 12a was caused by the locusts is ascribed to the warlike people (v. 7a). Since it is the deliberate intention of the hostile army to destroy the tree plantations, the transition from the metaphor to the factual description is here a fluid one. The cast back to the songs of the enemy from the north in the book of Jeremiah makes the catastrophe as it is described here a reminder of the conquest and destruction which Judah suffered from the Babylonians in the sixth

45 Bergler, *Joel als Schriftinterpret*, 187–211; Jeremias, *Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha*, 14.

century (and of any such catastrophe the Jewish community had experienced in history). The thorough use of the Hebrew perfect is noteworthy. Here too, we should say with Wellhausen: "The preterites should be noted."⁴⁶ This is no prophecy but lament about events that have already taken place.

The military catastrophe suggested in this description has led to all kinds of intensifications in the rest of the chapter too. In v. 12b α the phrase $\text{כָּל-עֵצֵי הַשָּׂדֶה}$ "all the trees of the field" has been added to the older poem in order to expand the destruction to all kind of trees, thus irritating the original poetical rhythm. In v. 12b β the loss of joy is applied to all human beings. In a similar way, the call to the ceremony of lamentation in v. 14 is supposed to go out to "all the inhabitants of the land." Possibly also the suffering of the flocks mentioned in v. 18b should be included here. The additive particle גַּם "even" shows that it is an expansion—probably together with v. 19b. It describes that the flocks of sheep and goats are also affected by the general plight.

Even the flocks of sheep <are desolate>, [...]
for fire has devoured (אֵשׁ אָכְלָה) the pastures of the steppe,
and flame has burned (וְלֹהֶבֶת לָהֲטָה) all the trees of the field.

Here it is not anymore the locusts which provide the model of the catastrophe but the theophany as it is described in 2:3a: "Fire devours (אֵשׁ אָכְלָה) before him, and after him a flame burns (תִּלְהֶט לְהִבָּה)."

This shows that we are on an advanced level in the tradition history of the book. The storm of the locusts on the one side and the Day of Yahweh on the other are both presupposed and now combined on a third stage.

This becomes even more obvious in 1:15:

Alas for the day! For the Day of Yahweh is near,
and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

It is commonly held that this verse is an interpolation.⁴⁷ The cry of distress which originally was part of the ceremony of lamentation is defined as a lament over the Day of Yahweh which is imminent. The words are in part borrowed from Zeph 1:7: $\text{כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה}$ "for the Day of Yahweh is near."⁴⁸ Joel 1:15 does not belong to the same level as the

46 See above n. 18.

47 See, for instance, Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 86–87; Duhm, *Anmerkungen*, 97; Hölscher, *Die Propheten*, 433; Robinson, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten*, 61; Jepsen, "Kleine Beiträge," 86; Plöger, *Theokratie und Eschatologie*, 119.

48 Joel 1:15 is commonly held as depending on Ezek 30:2–3 and Isa 13:6, see, for instance, Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, 123; Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 86; Hölscher, *Die Propheten*, 431; Jepsen, "Kleine Beiträge," 87; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 35; Jeremias, *Joel, Obadja*,

theophany description in 2:1–11; on the contrary: it establishes a later link with that. Here too as in the expansion of the Day of Yahweh-section 2:1–11—i.e., in vv. 2aβb, 3bα, 5aβγb, 7—the swarm of locusts has passed over into the description of a mighty army (cf. גוי עָצוּם “powerful nation” 1:6 with עַם רַב וְעָצוּם “great and powerful people” 2:2, and with קָעַם עָצוּם “powerful people” in 2:5).

11. ... has become Yahweh's own Army (2:1aβ, 3bβ, 6, 8–9, 11aβγ, b*)

This transformation of the locusts into a great hostile army in 2:1–11 has been expanded and again modified at a still later stage. In v. 11aβγ the army is now named Yahweh's own mighty host which is to come up in order to fulfill his commands:

before his army, for his host is exceedingly great;
for he that executes his word is powerful.

No one is to withstand this invincible power. In vv. 8–9 the attack is given in still more details.

They do not jostle each one another,
each in his path they march.
Through the midst of missiles they attack, they are not halted.
They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls;
they climb up into the houses,
through the windows they enter like a thief.

The repetitions and resumptions show that this part of the description is an expansion. But now the tenses have changed into the future. What happened in history has become an imminent event. This event takes on the features of a complete and world-wide destruction. We should probably see further dramatizations in this connection. In v. 1aβ the trembling of the earth (רָגַז, v. 10) has been extended to the inhabitants of the whole world:

Jona, Micha, 18. However, Joel 1:15 is much nearer to Amos 5 and Zephaniah 1 than to Isaiah 13. See Wolff, *ibid.*: “It is noteworthy that the declarations ... from Ezek 30:2–3 and Isa 13:6 are directed there against foreign nations, but here against Jerusalem–Judah, i.e., used in the sense of Am 5:18–20 and Zeph 1:7–18.” The imperative הִיָּלֵלוּ “wail” which introduces Isa 13:6 (other than אֲהֵה לַיּוֹם “alas for the day” in Joel 1:15) is taken from Joel 1:5, 11 where it belongs to the earlier layer of the text. From this follows that Isa 13:6 represents a later stage in the tradition historical sequence. Crenshaw, *Joel*, 28, rightly concludes: “Establishing priority in such cases is notoriously difficult, and determining dates for insertions into older prophetic complexes seldom carries much conviction (e.g., Isa 13:6, 16; Amos 9:13).”

All the inhabitants of the earth shall tremble (יִרְגְּזוּ).

By this expansion the cultic noise of שֹׁפָר and תְּרוּעָה of v. 1aα is turned into an alarm signal. Verse 3bβ emphasizes that no one will survive the catastrophe, linked to the former text by the addition-particle וְגַם:⁴⁹

There is even no escape from it.

The rhetorical question added at the end of v. 11 should be interpreted similarly:

Who can endure it? (וְיִמְי יִכְלִינוּ)

In v. 6, which is apparently a quotation from Nah 2:11,⁵⁰ the downfall is extended to (all) nations:

Before it peoples are in anguish, all faces grow pale.

"This verse interrupts the description ... which began in v. 5 and is continued in v. 7."⁵¹ Taken together, all of these additions hint at the eschatological catastrophe which in Joel 3–4 fully dominates the text. They are very probably connected with these later expansions.

12. Yahweh the God of his People (1:19a, 20; 2:17bβγ–18, 20, 22a, 23aβb*, 25, 26b, [27])

When the hostile army turned into Yahweh's own mighty host, the question arises: What about the fate of Yahweh's own people? Are they to suffer as it has been so frequent in history, and does this mean the Jewish people to become the victim of their own God?

This problem was addressed on the final stage of the text. In 2:17bβγ the people complain:

Why should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?

The supposed utterance of the non-Jews is an expression of the challenge to faith which the existential adversity meant for the Jewish people, and especially for the devout among them. "That the heathen will otherwise say 'where is now your God?' is in the later period the incentive continually used to move Yahweh to helpful intervention on behalf

49 According to BHS (Karl Elliger) the phrase is an addition.

50 See, e.g., Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 216; Marti, *Dodekapropheten*, 127.

51 Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 99.

of his own.”⁵² The utterance is taken over word for word from Ps 79:10,⁵³ except that הַגּוֹיִם “the nations” has been replaced by בְּעַמִּים “among the nations,” perhaps because of the recollection that at least the Ninevites repented. Yahweh’s salvific reaction is reported directly afterwards in v. 18:

Then Yahweh became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people.

This statement constitutes a doublet with the promise proclaimed in v. 19. It probably belongs to the same literary level as v. 17bβγ.

There is another quotation from the Psalms to be found in the book of Joel, namely in 1:20:

Even the beasts of the field (בְּהֵמוֹת שָׂדֵה) long for you (תַּעֲרוֹג אֵלַיךְ)
because the water brooks (אֶפְיָי מַיִם) have dried up,
and fire has devoured the pastures of the steppe (נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר).

The complaint that the wild beasts suffer from the drought was later added to v. 19b. This is unequivocally shown by the additive וְגַם as well as by the resumptive repetition of v. 19bα. The expansion is based on Ps 42:2:

As a deer longs (תַּעֲרוֹג) for water brooks (אֶפְיָי מַיִם),
so longs my soul for you (אֵלַיךְ).

This time it is not the drought itself which constitutes the plight of the praying person—the thirst of the wild animals is nothing but an image of his own longing for Yahweh’s general assistance, as it is expressed in Joel 1:19a: “Unto you, Yahweh, I cry.” This becomes evident from what follows in Ps 42:4 (and is repeated in 42:11):

My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me continually: Where is your God?

Again the question is raised: “Where is your God?” From this it reveals that the two quotations of Ps 79:10 in Joel 2:17 as well as of Ps 42:2 in Joel 1:20 are linked with each other. Both are addressed by Yahweh’s answer in 2:22a:

Fear not, you beasts of the field (בְּהֵמוֹת שָׂדֵה),
for the pastures of the steppe (נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר) are green.

The saying clearly relates to the lament 1:20. The plight is compensated by word. From the repetition of the reassurance-formula “fear not” it

52 Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 217.

53 See also Exod 32:12 [Exod 32:11–14 have been inserted between vv. 10 and 15, still missing in the *Vorlage* of Deut 9:14–15.]; Ps 115:2 [← 79:10]; 42:4, 11.

becomes obvious that this is a secondary addition to v. 21, too.⁵⁴ The same intention is to be found in what is secondarily added to v. 23:

the early rain for vindication (הַמִּזְרֵה לְצִדְקָה), he has poured down for you shower

The catchword “early rain” (מִזְרֵה) is taken up from the earlier text.⁵⁵ The repetition shows that this is an addition.⁵⁶ The return of the rain is to balance the former distress and thus re-establishing justice (צִדְקָה) for Yahweh’s people.

The same idea determines v. 25: Yahweh promises to compensate for the damage caused by the locust swarm of 1:4.

I will restore (וְשִׁלַּמְתִּי) to you the years which the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army (חֵיילֵי הַגָּדוֹל), which I sent among you.

As in 2:11a the locusts—i.e., the hostile army—are termed “Yahweh’s army” (חֵיילֵי הַגָּדוֹל), and are thereby identified with “the northerner.” It is Yahweh himself who has sent the enemy, but now he is about to pay compensation (שִׁלָּם *pi.*).

The enemy himself is threatened in v. 20. This verse again does not fit the context. The prayer has already been answered in v. 19. “Yahweh spares ... his people and promises it abundant grain, wine and oil. After this result, the removal of ‘the northerner’ comes ... too late; the verse is again referring not to natural locusts but supernatural ones.”⁵⁷ We again find ourselves here on the level on which the locust attack was equated with a hostile army, which has entered the country as Yahweh’s instrument of punishment.

I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear-guard into the western sea; his stench shall rise, and his foul smell shall rise, for he has done great things.

54 Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 108, points to the fact that the reason given in v. 22b relates to v. 21, not to v. 22a.

55 Generally speaking, מִזְרֵה is to be translated “teacher” from the root ירה III *hi.* “to teach.” However, in combination with מְלִקוֹשׁ “latter rain” as it is in v. 23b it may be deduced from the root ירה II *hi.* “to moisten” as a variant to the regular יורה “early rain,” cf. Deut 11:14 and Jer 5:24. Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel – Amos – Obadja – Jona* (KAT 13/2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1971), 66–68, deals most extensively with the problem.

56 See BHS (Karl Elliger).

57 Hölscher, *Die Propheten*, 432–33.

The fact that the enemy is called הַצִּפּוֹנִי “the northerner” shows even more clearly than 1:6–7 that the motif is modeled after the enemy from the north in Jer 4–6.⁵⁸ This enemy is now to be driven out, indeed punished. The reason כִּי הִגְדִּיל לַעֲשׂוֹת “for he has done great things” is taken from v. 21. This means, the instrument has put itself in Yahweh’s place. Its hybris will bring about its fall. More clearly than ever before, it is a matter of equalizing justice, that is to say of Yahweh’s justice in history.

At the end in v. 26b the editor brings his message to the point:

My people shall never again be put to shame.

This is also an addition, which is detectible from the double change from the form of address in the second person plural to the speech about עַמִּי “my people,” and from the talk *about* Yahweh to the divine speech, which reminds of Deutero-Isaiah (see Isa 45:17; 49:23).⁵⁹ Once again the subject is the motif about the shame to which God’s people have been subjected among the nations.

The proof saying,⁶⁰ which follows in v. 27, shows itself to be a further addition by way of the resumptive repetition of v. 26b in v. 27b. “This verse, added by a ... redactor summarizes the whole and proclaims that all these marvellous favours serve a definite purpose: to make Israel and the whole world recognize the uniqueness of Yahweh.”⁶¹ Here the complaining question in vv. 17bγ–18: “Where is their God?” is answered with still more emphasis: “You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel.” This is again a cast back to Deutero-Isaiah. And this is what shall be further elaborated in Joel 3–4.⁶²

13. Conclusion

The core of the book of Joel is a theophany description which in Joel 2:1–11, once the accretions have been peeled away, emerges as being the earliest stratum (2:1aα, b, 2aα, 3a, 10, 11aα*, b*). It evidently depends on parallel utterances in Zeph 1, and therefore also presupposes

58 See already Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 218.

59 See Wellhausen, *ibid.*; Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 110; Marti, *Dodekapropheton*, 135; Bewer, *Obadiah and Joel*, 114; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 56.

60 For this genre see Walther Zimmerli, “The word of divine self-manifestation (proof-saying): a prophetic genre,” in *I am Yahweh* (trans. D. W. Stott; Atlanta: John Knox, 1982).

61 Robinson, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten*, 65.

62 As a summary to the whole book, 2:27 is repeated in 4:17.

the thrust given to the motif in Amos 5, where it is moulded into a prophecy of disaster. However, the reinterpretation does not go very deep. The hymnic form has been well preserved. And in substance the original cultic concept is still paramount, too, as is shown by the numerous agreements with the "Yahweh is king"-psalms. These are not word for word quotations, but point to one and the same, still living group of motifs just as do the corresponding passages in the psalms themselves. Joel 2:1-11 contains the most detailed description of the Day of Yahweh which has been preserved, and shows even more clearly than Zeph 1 that on the Day of Yahweh the accession to the throne of the weather god was celebrated.

The Day of Yahweh is linked with a plague of locusts and the drought that follows it. The lamentation over the locusts constitutes the earliest level of Joel 1. The fragments, beginning with v. 4, fuse together into a coherent, poetically impressive description, which proves to be a second source on the basis of the book of Joel (1:4, 10a, 12a, 16a*, 17a, 18a). In 2:4-5aα, there is a further fragment, which according to the sequence of events ought to precede the description given in Joel 1. In the composition as it now stands, the locust swarm has turned into the terrible phenomenon going along with the theophany.

The description of the distress which was caused by the locusts is regularly interrupted in 1:5, 8, 11, 14* by calls for collective lamentation. Here elements of a liturgy are evident. The lament is answered by an oracle of salvation which is to be found in 2:21, 22b, 24a, 26a*. It takes up the jubilation over the (divine) king in the theophany. Here Yahweh's theophany on his day is nevertheless still a salvific event; it means the turn to salvation.

Later, before the hearing of the plea, in 2:12-14a, 15-16, 17bα, 19 a call to repentance has been interpolated. This has interrupted the direct sequence of theophany and announcement of salvation. The call links up with Amos 4:6-11, and fits the locust plague into the series of plagues listed there, plagues through which Yahweh wants to call his people to repent. The model for the repentance rites was to be found in Jonah 3, but in Joel Yahweh's remorse is no longer attributed to his justice, as it is in Jonah 3, on the basis of Jer 18:7-10; here, as in Jonah 4, it is ascribed by way of the formula of grace to his compassion. At the same time the reference to the book of Jonah also brings into play the relationship between God's people and the non-Jews. Consequently the call to repentance is linked with Deut 10:12-15. There the love of God enjoined by the *Shema*^c is the condition for the land's moistening and blessing. In complete correspondence with this, the description of the distress in Joel 1 is furnished in vv. 10b and 17b with pointers to Deut

11, as well as the oracle of salvation are supplemented in 2:23*, 24b, 26aα* in such a way.

The narrative with which 2:19 reports that the prayer has been heard is logical, but fundamentally speaking it changes the character of the book as a whole. Now it becomes possible in 1:2–3 to introduce the description of the distress and the call to lamentation as being the recollection and accompaniment of an act of rescue that has taken place. At the same time the book may have received its present heading in 1:1 by which it became part of the *corpus propheticum*.

The ceremony of repentance evokes the dilemma that the drought was bound to prevent the offerings, and thus the means by which Yahweh was to be moved to end the drought. Joel 1 and 2:1–19 were noticeably expanded by this theme (1:9, 13, 14aγ, 16; 2:14b, 17a).

A still later literary level interprets the locust swarm as the attack by the nations, drawing on the songs about the enemy from the north in the book of Jeremiah (1:6–7, 12bα*, b, 14aβ*, 15, 18b, 19b). Now the book became the memory of history—a lament about Judah's defeat and an expression of hope for restitution.

The storm of the locusts/nations eventually assumed the features of the eschatological catastrophe. The Day of Yahweh turned into the *dies irae*, as it was generally conceived in later times.⁶³ Now the nations/locusts are seen as Yahweh's own army. They became his instrument to judge all inhabitants of the earth (2:1aβ, 3bβ, 6, 8–9, 11aβγ, b*).

This raised the question about Yahweh's relation to his own people: "Where is their God?" What does the prophecy of doom mean about Yahweh's justice in history? Now the final judgment is seen as serving Yahweh to balance the fate of his pious. He shall destroy all of their enemies and put an end to their distress for all time (1:19a, 20; 2:17bβγ–18, 20, 22a, 23aβb*, 25, 26b, [27]). The book of Joel is now to be read as Yahweh's promise that he will finally re-establish his people and that his presence in the midst of Israel will never be put into question.

63 See Spieckermann, "Dies Irae."

Coping with Drought and Famine in some Post-Exilic Texts

BOB BECKING

*Dry summer, then comes fall,
Which I depend on most of all.
Hey, rainmaker, can't you hear my call?
Please let these crops grow tall.**

1. Introduction

Drought is one of the perennial problems of mankind.¹ Lack of water can be due to a wane of rainwater and or the drying up of wells. Lack of water leads to crop failure and hence to the diminution of food supply for a community. This primary result can develop into greater disasters such as hunger, decimation of the population and quite often forced migration.² The drought in Somalia in the summer of 2011 has given a recent example of this chain of events and the humanitarian disaster it provoked.³ Drought, however, is not an incident. History is

* Some lines from Robbie R. Robertson's song 'King Harvest (Has Surely Come),' performed by The Band on their 1969 album, 'The Band'; see, e.g., Marcus Greil, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll* (fourth edition; New York: Plume, 1997), 55–56; on the drought in the American Mid-West see now, Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (25th Anniversary edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

1 See R. V. Garcia and J. Escudero, *Drought and Man* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1986); Amartya Sen, *Resources, Values and Development* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

2 See, e.g., William B. Wood, "Forced Migration: Local Conflicts and International Dilemmas," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84 (1994): 607–34; Ruth Haug, "Forced Migration, Processes of Return and Livelihood Construction among Pastoralists in Northern Sudan," *Disasters* 26 (2002): 70–84; Rafael Reuveny, "Climate change-induced migration and violent conflict," *Political Geography* 26 (2007): 656–73.

3 See, e.g., Joseph Romm, "Desertification: The next Dust Bowl," *Nature* 478 (2011): 450–51; Anna Lindley, "Between a Protracted and a Crisis Situation: Policy Responses to Somali Refugees in Kenya," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 30 (2011): 14–49.

full of accounts of drought as can be inferred from written evidence.⁴ Already the Gilgamesh epic reports a drought as a result of the voracious appetite of the Bull of Heaven sent by Ishtar in revenge of Gilgamesh's rejection of her erotic proposal.⁵ In the Babylonia story of the flood, Atra-ḥasis, it is narrated that the gods are looking for ways to stop the growth of humanity and the growing intensity of the noise of mankind. The god Enlil—again disturbed in his sleep—decided to use drought and famine as a means to decrease the population. Adad withholds the rain. Atra-ḥasis, however, finds out the ways of the gods and after erecting a temple for Adad by humans, the gods decide to rescind the drought.⁶ The book of Genesis relates how a drought forced Abram to take refuge in Egypt, it is impossible to date this event.⁷ Paleoclimatological research has unveiled many droughts in the past. As regards the Southern Levant/ Israel/Palestine—which is a semi-arid area—various droughts could be mentioned. I will name a few. At the end of the Early Bronze Age—around 2200 BCE—a severe shift to a drier climate coincided with the collapse of the society.⁸ In 1947 a large drought

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- 4 Sometimes, the eager search for the motive of drought in ancient texts is based on incorrect readings of these text; a good example is Julius A. Bewer, "Ancient Babylonian Parallels to the Prophecies of Haggai," *AJS* 35 (1919): 128–33, suggested a parallel between the motive of drought in the Book of Haggai and passages Gudea Cylinder A. The Sumerian text, however, had been misunderstood by the editor of the editio princeps—François Thureau-Dangin, *Les inscriptions de Sumer et d'Akkad*, (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905)—and does not contain the 'drought motive,' see Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, "Restoring the Temple: Why and When?," *JQR* 93 (2003): 581–91.
 - 5 Gilg Epic vi: 115–119; the theme is already present in the Sumerian tale 'Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven' Fragment B 55–64; for text see Antoine Cavigneaux, Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi, "Gilgameš et le Taureau de ciel (Šul-mè-Kam): textes de Tell Haddad IV," *ZA* 87 (1993): 97–129.
 - 6 Atr II i-ii, see Alan R. Millard, "The Sign of the Flood," *Iraq* 49 (1987): 63–69; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1–9," in *The Flood Myth* (ed. A. Dundes; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 64; Warren C. Robertson, "Drought, Famine, Plague, and Pestilence: Ancient Israel's Understanding of and Responses to Natural Catastrophes" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 2007), 64–66.
 - 7 Gen 12:10–20; see also Gen 26:1; 41; Ruth 1:1; 1 Kgs 17:7; David C. Hopkins, "Life on the Land: The Subsistence Struggles of Early Israel," *BA* 50 (1987): 178–91; Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 1998), 44; David Hillel, *The Natural History of the Bible: An Environmental Exploration of the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 29–30, 60, 158.
 - 8 See: Arlene M. Rosen, "The Social Response to Environmental Change in Early Bronze Age Canaan," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 14 (1995): 26–44; David H. K. Amiran, "The Climate of the Ancient Near East: The Early Third Millennium BC in the Northern Negev of Israel," *Erdkunde* 45 (1991): 153–62; Arlene M. Rosen, "Environmental Change and Human Adaptational Failure at the End of the Early

forced Negev herdsmen to move as north as the Jezreel and the Beisan valleys.⁹ These examples could easily be multiplied.¹⁰ In this paper I would like to concentrate on the Persian or Achaemenid period, 538–333 BCE. I am especially looking at ways in which people found a way to cope with drought and how these strategies are reflected in Biblical texts. I have, thus, to analyse a set of texts. The first step, however, would be to ask for the reality of drought in Persian period Yehud – as the area under consideration is named then. What do we know about periods of drought and their effects for the local population?

2. Reconstructing Drought in Yehud

2.1 Evidence for Periods of Drought

By way of preliminary remark, it should be stated that two kinds of drought are to be distinguished. (1) A yearly cycle and (2) periodic drought due to climate variations. Since the end of the last ice-age, the climate of the Southern Levant/Israel/Palestine has been characterized by a seasonal pattern in which on a yearly base a period of rainfall is alternated by a period of drought.¹¹ It goes without saying that after a dry period the first rain was very much awaited as is reflected in the Biblical stories on Elijah and Elisha. A drier year in the midst of normal or wet years, generally did not lead to serious agricultural problems. A series of subnormal years, however, would lead to the second kind of drought.¹² Amiran has argued that a series of three drier years has

Bronze Age in the Southern Levant," in *Third Millennium BC Climate Change and Old World Collapse* (ed. H. N. Dalfes, G. Kukla, and H. Weiss; Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 1997), 25–38; Arlene M. Rosen, *Civilizing Climate: Social Responses to Climate Change in the Ancient Near East* (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2007).

9 Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 81.

10 For the influence of droughts in the collapse of the Mayan culture in Central America see: James W. Webster, et al., "Stalagmite evidence from Belize indicating significant droughts at the time of Preclassic Abandonment, the Maya Hiatus, and the Classic Mayacollapse," *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 250 (2007): 1–17.

11 See David C. Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in the Early Iron Age* (SWBA 3; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985), 79–108; Hopkins, "Life on the Land"; Frank S. Frick, "Ecology, Agriculture and Patterns of Settlement," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives* (ed. Ronald E. Clements; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 67–94.

12 Frick, "Ecology, Agriculture and Patterns of Settlement," 71.

caused periodical drought both in antiquity and in more modern times.¹³

This brings me to the second kind of drought. There exists a huge variation in the annual rainfall in the Southern Levant/Israel/Palestine. Recent research has made clear a great variety in the measured amounts of rainfall in Southern Israel during the period 1950–2003 CE.¹⁴ It is of course alluring to postulate on the basis of this evidence that comparable variations in rainfall took place in Persian period Yehud. Such an assumption, however, would deny the fact that climate is never stable and that since the end of the last ice-age great varieties in climate have been found.¹⁵ Isar supplies an interesting insight in the variations of rainfall in the Holocene.¹⁶ Of great interest are the data supplied by him on rainfall in the Soreq cave. This cave is to be found on the Western slopes of Mount Ye'elah in the Judean hill country.¹⁷

From the evidence found there, it becomes clear that during the Persian period rain was not a constant factor. The discussion of the evidence from the Soreq cave makes clear that in the Persian period an alternation of dryer and more humid times can be assumed.¹⁸ This as-

13 David H. K. Amiran, "Land use in Israel," in *Land Use in semi-arid Mediterranean Climates: Proceedings of the Iraklion Symposium* (Paris: UNESCO, 1964), 101–12.

14 See, e.g., Yair Goldreich, "Temporal Variations of Rainfall in Israel," *Climate Research* 5 (1995): 167–79; Yizhak Yosef, Hadas Saaroni, and Pinhas Alpert, "Trends in Daily Rainfall Intensity Over Israel 1950/1–2003/4," *The Open Atmospheric Science Journal* 3 (2009): 196–203; Hussein Al-Rimmawi, Marwan Ghanem, and Ibrahim Shalash, "Rainfall Trends in the District of Ramallah and Al-Bireh, Palestine," *Journal for Water Resource and Protection* 2 (2010): 345–52.

15 See esp. Arie S. Isar, *Climate Changes during the Holocene and their Impact on Hydrological Systems International Hydrology Series* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

16 Isar, *Climate Changes*, 9.

17 The cave is often referred to as the Avshalom Cave, after Avshalom Shoham, an Israeli soldier killed in the War of Attrition; on this limited war between Israel and Egypt, see: Ahmed S. Khalidi, "The War of Attrition," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3 (1973): 60–87; Chaim Herzog and Gazit Shlomo, *The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

18 See Miryam Bar-Matthews, Avner Ayalon, and Aaron Kaufman, "Late Quaternary Paleoclimate in the Eastern Mediterranean Region from Stable Isotope Analysis of Speleothems at Soreq Cave, Israel," *Quaternary Research* 47 (1997): 155–68; Miryam Bar-Matthews, Avner Ayalon, Aaron Kaufman, "Middle to Late Holocene (6500 years period) Paleoclimate in the Eastern Mediterranean Region from Stable Isotopic Composition of Speleothems from Soreq Cave, Israel," in *Water, Environment and Society in times of Climate Change* (ed. A. S. Issar and N. Brown; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 203–14; Frank McDermott, "Palaeo-climate reconstruction from stable isotope variations in speleothems: a review," *Quaternary Science Reviews* 23 (2004): 901–18; Ian J. Orland, et al., "Climate deterioration in the Eastern Mediter-

sumption, however, is corroborated by the research of Brian Dermody on wet and dry periods in the Mediterranean in the period 600 BCE–600 CE.¹⁹

2.2 Effects on the Economy and the Community

It would be interesting to correlate the data on climate with economic figures. Recent research, for instance by the group of Bert van der Spek of the Free University of Amsterdam, has revealed interesting insights into the fluctuation of prices in the Persian lead to some interesting insights.²⁰ From the evidence collected, it can be deduced that in the first third of the fifth century prices were relatively stable in Babylon. Around 465–460, prices were rising upwards only to reach a new stability around 400. It should be noted that favourable climate conditions—and hence better harvests—are not the only factors that determine price variations.²¹ Warfare and social unrest as well could explain such changes. Next to that, it is important to note that this graph is based on evidence from Babylon. The Southern Levant/Israel/Palestine is by all means a different economic pocket. Nevertheless, it is quite safe to say that also in the periphery of the Persian Empire prices of basic commodities fluctuated partly due to rainfall variation.

3. The Concept of Coping

Coping is a process by which human beings encounter the troubles and disasters that disrupt their lives. Coping generally is defined in psychological terms, as has been done by Susan Folkman and Richard Lazarus who construe coping to be a “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing.”²² In other words, coping is a strategy to solve

anean as Revealed by Ion Microprobe Analysis of a Speleothem that Grew from 2.2 to 0.9 ka in Soreq Cave, Israel,” *Quaternary Research* 71 (2009): 27–35.

19 B. J. Dermody, et al., “Revisiting the Humid Roman Hypothesis: Novel Analyses Depict Oscillating Patterns,” *Climate of the Past Discussions* 7 (2011): 2355–89.

20 See: Joost Huijs, Reinhard Pirngruber, and Bas van Leeuwen, “Climate, War and Economic Development: The case of Babylon,” in press.

21 See Reinhard Pirngruber, “The Impact of Empire on Market Prices in Babylon in the Late Achaemenid and Seleucid Periods, ca. 400 - 140 BC” (Ph.D. diss., Vrije Universiteit University Amsterdam, 2012).

22 Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman, *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping* (New York: Springer Publishing Company 1984), 141; see also Katharine H. Karraker and Margaret A. Lake, “Normative Stress and Coping Processes in Infancy,” in *Life-span De-*

personal and interpersonal problems that have been caused by unexpected fissures in on-going life. The aim of coping is to reduce stress and to find ways for acceptance. Psychologists have detected hundreds of different ways in which humans try to cope with the infringements of their life. In this variety three foci can be seen. Sometimes people concentrate on accepting the disaster. Sometimes people concentrate on knowing as many facts as possible that caused their disaster. Sometimes people concentrate on the emotions that were aroused and released as a result of the disruption. In most cases, however, people choose a strategy that combines these three approaches.²³

Coping, however, is not restricted to the individual. Communities can be seen as extended persons that share an ethnic identity. Communities are to be seen as 'named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland, and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members.'²⁴ When the existence or the continuity of a community is challenged, communities try to cope with the changed situation in ways that are parallel to the coping strategies of the individual. Quite often informal leaders rise to steer the community and lead it through times of trouble. Looking at the ways in which communities coped for instance with the earthquake and tsunami that hit the Gulf of Bengali on the Second Day of Christmas 2004, the three approaches mentioned above can easily be detected. Accepting the disaster is visible in all reactions that took the tsunami as a divine act.²⁵ The factual approach is present in all those reactions that discussed the forces of nature and the drift of the tectonic plates in an attempt to un-

velopmental Psychology: Perspectives on Stress and Coping (ed. E. M. Cummings, et al.; Hillsdale: Lawrence Earlbaum, 1991), 92.

- 23 See, e.g., Wayne Weiten and Marky Lloyd, *Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustments in the 21st Century*, (Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2008); Charles S. Carver and Jennifer Connor-Smith, "Personality and Coping," *Annual Review of Psychology* 61 (2010): 679–704.
- 24 J. Hutchinson and A. D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6; see also M. B. Moore and B. E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011), 129–32.
- 25 Saudi cleric Muhammad Al-Munajjid attributed it to divine retribution against non-Muslim vacationers "who used to sprawl all over the beaches and in pubs overflowing with wine" during the Christmas break; Lucian Dep, a Roman Catholic priest from Colombo understood the tsunami as a sign of God that He is in control and a message for mankind to turn away from their wretched lives; for these and comparable reactions see Brian Murphy, "Tsunami survivors cling tightly to faith across ravaged region," at <http://www.baylor.edu/pr/index.php?id=25982>.

derstand what exactly happened.²⁶ The majority of reactions, however, concentrated on the emotional impact the tsunami had for so many people.²⁷ A comparable trend can be detected in the research on the ways of coping among a group of drought-affected South Australian farmers and their spouses.²⁸

Quite often, coping has a religious dimension.²⁹ The role of religion in the first approach is apparent. Nevertheless, this acceptance is often disputed and leads to a reframing of the image of the deity.³⁰ In modern times this quite often includes a farewell to the theistic image of God as omniscient and omnipresent in favour of a more personal.³¹ In Biblical times, the traditional 'core-testimony' was no longer appreciated.³² Next to the book of Job,³³ a good example can be found in Ps 121, where the experience in life contests the traditional belief system.³⁴ This pro-

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- 26 E.g., Robert S. Pomeroy, et al., "Coping with disaster: Rehabilitating coastal livelihoods and communities," *Marine Policy* 30 (2006): 786–93; Naomi W. Lazarus, "Coping capacities and rural livelihoods: Challenges to community risk management in Southern Sri Lanka," *Applied Geography* 31 (2011): 20–34.
- 27 See, e.g., Renato Souza, Sasha Bernatsky, Rosalie Reyes, Kaz de Jong, "Mental health status of vulnerable tsunami-affected communities: A survey in Aceh Province, Indonesia," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 20 (2007): 263–69; Michael Hollifield, et al., "Symptoms and coping in Sri Lanka 20–21 months after the 2004 tsunami," *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 192 (2008): 39–44.
- 28 Kate M. Gunn, et al., "Farmers' Stress and Coping in a Time of Drought," *Rural and Remote Health* 12 (2012): 2071, Available online: <http://www.rrh.org.au>.
- 29 Kenneth I. Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* (New York: Guildford Press, 1997); S. Kwilecki, "Religion and Coping: A contribution from Religious Studies," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43 (2004): 477–89; Kenneth I. Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred* (New York: Guildford Press, 1997).
- 30 On this concept see now Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Blocks Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- 31 In connection with the 2004 Tsunami, see: Ajmal Hussain, Lars Weisaeth, and Trond Heir, "Changes in Religious Beliefs and the Relation of Religiosity to Posttraumatic Stress and Life Satisfaction after a Natural Disaster," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 46 (2011): 1027–32.
- 32 See, e.g., Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).
- 33 See, e.g., Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Kenneth Ngwa, "Did Job Suffer for Nothing? The Ethics of Piety, Presumption and the Reception of Disaster in the Prologue of Job," *JSOT* 33 (2009): 359–80.
- 34 See Bob Becking, "God-Talk for a Disillusioned Pilgrim in Psalm 121," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9 (2009) article 15, available online at www.jhsonline.org and republished under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VI* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 7; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2010), 339–48.

cess of reframing is quite often induced by the emotional approach and by the fact that the information from the factual approach cannot easily be connected with a traditional image of God. In this connection, it would be good to refer to the fact that in the discourse on theodicy a close connection can be seen between the momentum of acceptance and the set of human acts that aims at overcoming the effects of the disaster.³⁵

4. Hebrew Bible

I would like to pay attention to three texts: Neh 5; Ps 126 and Hag 1. I have chosen these texts for two reasons. Firstly, they are almost unanimously dated in the Persian period and secondly they deal one way or another with the problem of drought and its effects. I will read these texts as human reactions and way of coping with the disaster. I would like to read them through the lens of the following matrix or questionnaire:

Is a reason for the drought given?
 Are the economic and social consequences of the drought presented?
 What role does God play in overcoming the drought?
 What role are humans supposed to play in overcoming the drought?
 Which of the three approaches is dominant?

Figure 1
A reading matrix

5. Nehemiah 5

In the book of Nehemiah, drought is not referred to. Nevertheless, I would like to discuss Neh 5.³⁶ Nehemiah, like Ezra, is generally con-

35 See, e.g., Marcel Sarot, "Theodicy and Modernity: An Inquiry into the Historicity of Theodicy," in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (ed. A. Laato, J. C. de Moor; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1–26.

36 I thus disagree with Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "The Politics of Ezra: Sociological Indicators of Postexilic Judaeon Society," in *Second Temple Studies: 1. Persian Period* (ed. P. R. Davies; JSOTSup 117; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 73–97, who assumes that the famine referred to in Neh 5 was caused by the introduction of silver coinage in Palestine by the Persian administration, see also Amartya Sen, *Pov-*

nected with the harsh and seemingly inhumane solution of the mixed marriage crisis.³⁷ Nehemiah was, nevertheless, involved in other moral and societal problems, as will be shown below. As will become clear,

erty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Diana V. Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005), 341. I also disagree with Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Judaism, the First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 7, who thinks that the economically depressed situation in the days of Nehemiah was due to the fiscal policies of the Persian monarchs and Philip Guillaume, "Nehemiah 5: No Economic Crisis," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10 (2010) article 8, available online at www.jhsonline.org, and republished under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VII* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 15; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2011), 239–60, who argues that Nehemiah 5 does not reflect a real economic crisis, but only displays Nehemiah's social agenda; see also the criticism by Marvin L. Miller, "Nehemiah 5: A Response to Philippe Guillaume," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10 (2010) article 13, available online at www.jhsonline.org, and republished under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VII* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 15; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2011), 423–28; and the reaction of Philippe Guillaume and Georges Mills, "Paper Crises and Crying Prophets: A Rejoinder to Marvin Lloyd Miller," *SJOT* 26 (2012): 44–54.

- 37 See on this, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1988), 60–69; Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "The Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9–10 and Nehemiah 13: A Study of the Sociology of Post-Exilic Judean Community," in *Second Temple Studies 2: Temple and Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards; JSOTSup 175; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 243–65; Tamara C. Eskenazi and E.P. Judd, "Marriage to a Stranger in Ezra 9–10," in *Second Temple Studies 2: 266–85*; Ehud Ben Zvi, "Inclusion and Exclusion from Israel as conveyed by the Use of the Term 'Israel' in Post-Monarchic Biblical Texts," in *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy; JSOTSup 190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 113–27; Lester L. Grabbe, "Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes? The Ezra-Nehemiah Reforms and their Nachgeschichte," in *Jewish Local Patriotism and Self-Identification in the Graeco-Roman Period* (ed. S. Jones and S. Pearce; JSPSup 31; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 50–65; Charles C. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 313–16; Saul M. Olyan, *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy of Biblical Representations of Cult*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), esp. 81–90; Bob Becking, "The Idea of Torah in Ezra 7–10: A functional Analysis," *ZABR* 7 (2001): 273–86; Daniel Janzen, *Witch-Hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries: The Expulsion of the Foreign Women in Ezra 9–10* (JSOTSup 350; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: Volume 1 Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (LSTS 47; London: T & T Clark 2004), 313–17; Thomas Hieke, *Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia* (NSKAT 9/2; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 143–46; Bob Becking, "On the Identity of the 'Foreign' Women in Ezra 9–10," in *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter R. Ackroyd* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Garry N. Knoppers; LSTS 73; London New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 31–49; Donald P. Moffat, *Ezra's Social Drama: Identity Formation, Marriage and Social Conflict in Ezra 9 and 10* (LHBOTS; London: T & T Clark, 2013).

Nehemiah was confronted with poverty in his surroundings. In my view, this poverty was induced by a drought leading to crop failure, high prices and economic misery. It is tempting to connect this drought with a real time drought, but I will not do so. It is more interesting to see, how Nehemiah dealt with that problem and what coping strategies he offered to the community surrounding him.

About the economic circumstances during the Persian period, not much is known.³⁸ In case the results on economic development in Babylon³⁹ could be translated into the situation in Persian period Yehud, then the era of Nehemiah could be construed as a period that was characterized by quickly rising prices. Our poor and insufficient knowledge is mainly caused by the fact that in the period under consideration, Yehud was populated less densely than it was during the monarchic period. Next to that, relatively few archaeological remains have been uncovered. The evidence at our disposal nevertheless yields the following picture. The economy was mainly of an agricultural character. Some traces of trade are found, indicating the distribution of food. The results of tilling and herding were meant for the local market. Luxury products were quite scarce.⁴⁰

A backsliding into the more original phase of a kinship-based economy might be concluded. Such a conclusion, however, is premature. I don't think that life in Persian period Yehud can be pictured in the image of an idyllic community of poor but honest persons. A few threats were at the horizon that distorts such a romantic picture.

1. The pre-exilic relations of family, kinship, and clan with their connected social codes had disappeared. The group-internal solidarity with its sense of corporate identity had slowly disappeared. This is connected with the fact that land, acres, and vineyards no longer were bound to traditional family possession.⁴¹

38 See, however, H. Kreissig, *Die sozialökonomische Situation in Juda zur Achämenidenzeit* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients 7; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973); Willy Schottroff, "Zur Sozialgeschichte Israels in der Perserzeit," *Verkündigung und Forschung* 27 (1982): 46–68; Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: Volume 1*, 194–208.

39 See Huijs, Pirngruber, and Van Leeuwen, "Climate, War and Economic Development."

40 See, e.g., Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible Volume II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732–332 BCE)* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 360–582; Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit* (Biblische Enzyklopädie 8; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005).

41 Thus the concept of *חלה* faded away.

2. There are indications that during the Persian period, 'land' was no longer seen as part of a traditional system of kinship values. 'Land' was only construed as an economic factor.
3. Finally periods of drought⁴² lead to crop failure and the related poverty. To an unsteady economy, crop failure can have a disastrous outcome.

Nehemiah 5 narrates a story that can easily be understood as a reflection on the ways people coped with drought and famine. In the opening section the outcry of – especially women – on their poor status is voiced:

Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish kin. For there were those who said,

'With our sons and our daughters, we are many; we must get grain, so that we may eat and stay alive.'

There were also those who said,

'We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine.'

And there were those who said,

'We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax. Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others.'⁴³

It is unclear when this outcry was uttered. The text-internal chronology suggests a connection with the period after the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Some scholars challenge this connection. They are of the opinion that the events narrated in Neh 5 are in no way contemporary with the period of the building of the walls. They would stem from a much later period in the life of Nehemiah. The final redactor of the book of Nehemiah would have connected unconnected narratives for unclear reasons.⁴⁴ Williamson has – convincingly – shown that the liter-

42 Periods of droughts can be assumed on the basis of the variation of rainfall.

43 Neh 5:1–5; see, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Judaism*, 115; Guillaume and Mills, "Paper Crises and Crying Prophets," 46–48, argue that the Persian system of taxation was not haphazard.

44 See, e.g., Loring W. Batten, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (ICC; Edinburgh; T & T Clark, 1913), 237–44; Joachim Becker, *Der Ich-Bericht des Nehemiabuches als chronistische Gestaltung* (FB 87; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1998), 62–67; Daniel Bodi, *Jérusalem à l'époque perse* (Paris: Geuthner, 2002); Titus Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias: Zur literarischen Eigenart, traditionsgeschichtlichen Prägung und innerbiblischen Rezeption des Ich-Berichtes Nehemias* (OBO 183; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 129–37.

Jacob L. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoir and its Earliest Readers* (BZAW 348; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 163–88, construes Neh 5:1–13 as a part

ary construction of the book of Nehemiah would suggest a time span between the rebuilding of the walls and the incident in Neh 5.⁴⁵

In the first episode, Neh 5:1–5, a threefold complaint is uttered: hunger, poverty, and desperateness. These complaints are voiced by different groups as becomes clear from the repetition of ויש אשר אמרים, ‘there were some who said’ (Neh 5:2, 3, 4). It is unclear whether three different social groups should be assumed⁴⁶ or that people in different phases of the process of impoverishment are indicated.⁴⁷ Besides, the cause of all this sadness is not narrated, but I assume crop failure as a result of drought. The effect of crop failure is, however, hardened by the local economy. The victims – and I assume them to be from the poorer classes—are caught in a network of obligations. Their reserves are emptied. They had to sell their plots of land and had mortgaged their acres to pay off existing debts or meet the requirements of the taxes.⁴⁸ Loan rates were about 40–50% a year as can be deduced from Babylonian and Persian economic inscriptions.⁴⁹ Crop failure has expedited the way downward, since the absence of a harvest implies the absence of means to pay off debts. The people are standing desperately at the threshold of the abyss. The forces of nature and the free market economy have caused a split in society with a bitter and tragic out-

of the final redaction of the book of Nehemiah. According to Wright, this episode is of no historical value at all.

- 45 Hugh G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985), 234–35; see also Tamara C. Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah* (SBL Monograph Series 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 77–88; Grabbe, “Triumph of the Pious,” 163–64; John W. Rogerson, *Theory and Practice in Old Testament Ethics* (ed. M. Daniel Carroll R.; JSOTSup 405; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 131–32; Klaus-Dietrich Schunk, *Nehemia* (BKAT 23/2, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), 146; Edelman, *The Origins of the “Second” Temple*, 340–41.
- 46 As does Kreissig, *Die sozialökonomische Situation*, 78–79; see also Norman K. Gottwald, “The Expropriated and the Expropriators in Nehemiah 5,” in *Concepts of Class in Ancient Israel* (ed. M. R. Sneed; South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 201; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 1–19; Schunk, *Nehemia*, 147; Guillaume and Mills, “Paper Crises and Crying Prophets,” 45–46, argue that it was the average farmers who complained and not only some marginal cultivators (against Miller, “Nehemiah 5”).
- 47 Thus, Heinz G. Kippenberg, *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judäa: eine religionswissenschaftliche Studie zum Verhältnis von Tradition und gesellschaftlicher Entwicklung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 55–62; see also David L. Baker, *Tight Fists Or Open Hands?: Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 95–97; Blenkinsopp, *Judaism*, 113.
- 48 On taxes see: Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 238; M. Heltzer, *The Province of Judah and Jews in Persian Times*, (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publication, 2008), 161–72.
- 49 See Edward Neufeld, “The Rate Interest and the Text of Nehemiah 5:11,” *JQR* 44 (1953–54): 203–4; Carl D. Gross, “Is There Any Interest in Nehemiah 5?,” *SJOT* 11 (1997): 270–78; Blenkinsopp, *Judaism*, 113–14.

come. In order to pay off their duties, these people have to sell themselves or their children as slaves. In their complaint they invoke the traditional group-internal solidarity, as becomes clear from their language. Their appeal is based on the idea of non-differentiation. They consider the 'others' as their brothers (Neh 5:1) and as people of the same flesh (5:5).⁵⁰ Their compatriots seem to stand without emotion or sympathy at the other side of the divide.⁵¹ Nehemiah, however, shows empathy based on a deeply felt fury:

I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints. After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them,

'You are all taking interest from your own people.'

And I called a great assembly to deal with them, and said to them,

'As far as we were able, we have bought back our Jewish kindred who had been sold to other nations; but now you are selling your own kin, who must then be bought back by us!'

They were silent, and could not find a word to say. So I said,

'The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money⁵², grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.'

Then they said,

'We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them. We will do as you say.'

And I called the priests, and made them take an oath to do as they had promised. I also shook out the fold of my garment and said,

'So may God shake out everyone from house and from property who does not perform this promise. Thus may they be shaken out and emptied.'

And all the assembly said,

'Amen',

and praised YHWH. And the people did as they had promised.⁵³

50 Janzen, *Witch-Hunts*, 93.

51 See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 236–39; J. M. Halligan, "Nehemiah 5: By Way of a Response to Hoglund and Smith," in *Second Temple Studies 1* (ed. P. R. Davies; JSOT-Sup 117; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 146–53; Becker, *Der Ich-Bericht des Nehemiabuches*, 62–67; Schunk, *Nehemia*, 146–51; Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit*, 95–96; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 180–88.

52 For the interpretation of מֵאֵת הַכֶּסֶף see especially Heltzer, *The Province of Judah*, 83–86.

53 Neh 5:6–13.

Nehemiah shows compassion. Anger takes possession of him. He, nevertheless, is not paralyzed by his emotions, but he proposes concrete measures: 'Nehemiah carried a general amnesty for enslaved debtors and an annulment of every mortgage on land.'⁵⁴ Against the grain of the dominant worldview, he proposes a set of measures that economically can be labelled as redistribution. Redistribution is one of the three major economic activities: exchange, gift, and redistribution. These three mechanisms are characteristic for all economic systems, although cultural differences and moral codes yield to differences in the mixture of the three mechanisms from culture to culture and from time to time. The pivotal point in redistribution is that by the application of this institution, possession, income, wealth, and risks are distributed over the different members of a society. A good example is the system of income tax by which collective goods and services are made available for a society in its entirety. Those who are paying more, are not by implication those who profit more. Of the three basic mechanism mentioned, redistribution is constantly at risk while challenged by the free-rider's behaviour. The preponderance of individual profit over collective well-being is a serious threat for any community that wants to survive. Therefore, the continuation of redistribution is dependent of the good will of the members of a society. It is interesting to see that so-called prophetic voices are warning societies of the outcome of a merciless mechanism until this day. It is the duty of politics to safeguard the existing mechanisms of redistribution in order to protect civilians against the side effects of the free market economy.⁵⁵

Nehemiah proposes a redistribution of goods in order that the society in Yehud in its entirety can face the future. This proposal is based on the ancient concept of שְׁמִיטָה *šmittā*, 'remission.' Nehemiah's reaction on the outcry of his desperate compatriots is not only steered by his anger or his—albeit intuitive—insights in the economical mechanisms

54 See Niels Peter Lemche, "The Manumission of Slaves: The Fallow Year, the Sabbatical Year, the Jubel Year," *VT* 26 (1976): 53.

55 On redistribution see, e.g., Hannu Uusitalo, "Redistribution and Equality in the Welfare State: An Effort to Interpret the Major Findings of Research on the Redistributive Effects of Welfare State," *European Sociological Review* 1 (1985): 163–76; Gordon Tullock, *Economics of Income Redistribution* Studies in Public Choice 11, (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997); Casey B. Mulligan, *The Redistribution Recession: How Labor Market Distortions Contracted the Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); on redistribution in the ancient Near East see Morris Silver, "Karl Polanyi and Markets in the Ancient Near East: The Challenge of the Evidence," *The Journal of Economic History* 43 (1983): 795–829; Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* Library of Ancient Israel (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 195–200.

of his day. He also appropriates the long-standing moral traditions of Ancient Israel as they are instructed in the book of Deuteronomy to the circumstances in Persian period Yehud as they are instructed in the book of Deuteronomy.⁵⁶ As an answer to the social-economic shifts in Iron Age Judah and Israel, the traditional obligation to have the acres rest every seventh year has been appropriated and reformulated by the author of the book of Deuteronomy into an instruction to remit the debts of the poor in order for them to have a new chance in life.⁵⁷ This שְׁמִיטָה *šmittā*, ‘remission,’ is hoped to function as an element of redistribution. The Hebrew noun שְׁמִיטָה is derived from a verb שָׁמַט that refers to an act of loosening. The Israelites were summoned to have their claims loosened in order that their compatriots could continue their lives without the millstone of debts around their necks. The institution of the שְׁמִיטָה is an adequate means to avert social contrast of too large a character in ancient Israelite society. The fact that the prophet Jeremiah —supposedly living shortly after the reformation of king Josiah—inflamed several times in prophetic fury rebuking the Israelites for not living according to the social code of Yahwism, can be construed as an indication that the local elite did not really want to implement this social system of redistribution.⁵⁸ The abyss of individualism and free-rider’s conduct was an open option for the privileged in Judah.⁵⁹

In sum, Nehemiah offered the appropriation of the ancient institution of the שְׁמִיטָה as a strategy to cope with humanitarian disaster effected by the drought. This institution is to be seen as a God-given instrument for the continuation of the community that, however, can never do without human initiative. The case of Neh 5 shows—once more—

56 Deut 15:1–6; see, e.g., Martin J. Oosthuizen, “Deuteronomy 15,1–18 in Socio-Rhetorical Perspective,” *ZABR* 3 (1997): 64–91; Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands?*, 281–85. The author of the book of Deuteronomy reformulates stipulations already given in the so-called Book of the Covenant: Exod 23:10–11.

57 Lemche, “The Manumission of Slaves,” 38–59; Rainer Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte Israels in alttestamentlicher Zeit* (GAT 8/1-2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); Eckart Otto, *Theologische Ethik des Alten Testaments* (Theologische Wissenschaft 3/2; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), 249–56; McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 195–200; Walter Dietrich, “Theopolitik”: *Studien zur Theologie und Ethik des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002), 184–93; Baker, *Tight Fists or Open Hands?*, 281–85; Blenkinsopp, *Judaism*, 113–15.

58 Jer 34:8–22; from the abundance of literature on that pericope, I refer to two recent commentaries: Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21C; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 547–68; Georg Fischer, *Jeremia 26–52* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2005), 242–61.

59 Lev 25:13–17 is another postexilic text that takes the שְׁמִיטָה institution as a norm for social conduct; see also Otto, *Theologische Ethik*, 235–256.

that the Persian period cannot be seen as the age of legalism and inwardly looking forms of religion.⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that the reconstruction of Jerusalem after the exile—as depicted in the book of Nehemiah—was not only concerned with rebuilding the temple and the city-walls. Adequate social mechanisms, too, were part of the reconstruction. Poverty and excessive differences in wealth are—to Nehemiah—not destined by fate or human failure, but economic realities that are in need of being stripped of their sharp and bitter effects. Only along those lines will there be a future for Israel/Yehud.⁶¹

Returning to the matrix mentioned above, I would like to state that Neh 5 encounters my questions as follows:

Is a reason for the drought given?	No.
Are the economic and social consequences of the drought presented?	The drought leads to shortage and to unacceptable differences in wealth and poverty.
What role does God play in overcoming the drought?	None.
What role are humans supposed to play in overcoming the drought?	By implementing the traditional means of redistribution the gap in the community is to be bridged.
Which of the three approaches is dominant?	The factual is dominant but elements of the emotional are present.

Figure 2
The matrix and Neh 5

6. Psalm 126

Despite its shortness, Ps 126 has confronted its readers with a set of exegetical problems. Surveying the scholarship on the six verses of the hymn, it turns out that there exists disagreement on almost every aspect of this Psalm. I will name a few: Should the opening clauses of the Psalm be translated with a past, a present or a future tense? Is a turn of fate remembered in verse 1–3, or do these lines express hope for a future turn? Which turn of fate is referred to in verse 1? Is it the same turn

60 See Bob Becking, "The Idea of Torah in Ezra 7–10: A functional Analysis," *ZABR* 7 (2001): 273–86; *pace* esp. Gerhard Von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments Band I*, (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1969), 98–105, 214–15.

61 See also Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*; Otto, *Theologische Ethik*, 255–56; Grabbe, "Triumph of the Pious," 173–79.

as implied in verse 4? What is the character of the dream in verse 1–3? Should the Psalm be delineated into two or three sections and in what ways are these sections connected?⁶² When is the Psalm to be dated? I will not discuss these problems here in great detail. I will just present my reading of the Psalm.

I construe Ps 126 to be a postexilic text. Main arguments for that position are the connectedness with the other Songs of Ascent that as a group are to be seen as a post-exilic collection⁶³ and the reference to the joy of the nations on a turn in history. Such a motif is hard to suggest in a pre-exilic context, since then Israel and the nations were much more in a position of antagonism.

In Biblical Hebrew the *qāṭal*-form—traditionally labelled as perfect—has no fixed temporal indication. A variety of possibilities exists to render this form. Depending on the syntactical and narrative context a decision can be made. As regards Ps 126:1, some exegetes assume a perfectum propheticum⁶⁴, while others opt for a past tense.⁶⁵ The syntagma *b*+Infinitive in verse 1, *bšwb yhwḥ*, can only be construed as a reference to the past.⁶⁶ The syntactical construction *b^e* + Infinitive (*b^ešûb*) followed by a *qāṭal*-form (*hāyînû*) hints at a synchronism.⁶⁷ This implies that the ‘acts’ referred to by the verbal forms *b^ešûb*, ‘When He turned’, and *hāyînû*, ‘we were ...’, are to be seen as on the same temporal level. This synchronism is continued in the two clauses of verse 2 both beginning with the adverb ‘*āz*, ‘then.’ In other words, the grammatical and syntactical analysis hints at an understanding of Ps 126:1–3 as referring to events that had taken place in the past from the point of view of the Psalmist.

Both verse 1 and 4 contain the expression *šûb š^ebûṭ*. There has been a debate on the meaning of this syntagma. Sometimes *š^ebûṭ*, ‘fate’, is con-

62 See, e.g., the debate between Gert T. M. Prinsloo, “Analysing Old Testament Poetry: An Experiment in Methodology with Reference to Psalm 126,” *OTE* 5 (1992): 229–31, and Stefanie D. Snyman, “Psalm 126 : ‘n perspektief vanuit die hede na die verlede en die toekoms,” *Skrif en Kerk* 19 (1998): 644–52.

63 Pss. 120–134.

64 Walter Beyerlin, *Wir sind wie Träumende. Studien zum 126. Psalm* (SBS 89; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk), 1978.

65 Hans Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen*, 2. Teilband *Psalmen 60–150* (5th ed.; BKAT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1978), 1031.

66 Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew, Part Three: Syntax, Paradigms and Indices* (SubBi 14/2; Roma: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2005), § 166 l.

67 Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, § 166l; Bruce K. Waltke and M. P. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), § 36.2.2b.

strued as *šbûṭ*, 'captive.'⁶⁸ If that position were defensible, then Ps 126:1 would refer to the return of captives from the exile. Such an interpretation, however, is quite impossible in verse 4, which is in my opinion difficult to connect with the theme of exile and return. In 1925, however, Dietrich proposed – on the basis of a thorough analysis of all instances of the expression in the Hebrew Bible – that *šûb šbûṭ* should be seen as expressing the belief in an eschatological turn of fortunes. His translation 'Das alte nationale Ideal wiederherstellen' indicates that he construes the expression as a reference to a *restitutio ad integrum*.⁶⁹ His nationalistic concept has not been adopted, but the idea of a radical turn is still applauded. The find of the Aramaic Vassal Treaty between Bar-Ga'yah, king of KTK⁷⁰, and Mati'el, king of Arpad, dating from the mid eighth century BCE⁷¹ gave a decisive move to the interpretation of the expression under discussion. In this treaty the Aramaic counterpart of the Hebrew expression is attested: *hšbw 'lhn šybt by[t 'by ...]*, 'the gods turned the fate of [my father's h]ouse.'⁷² The Aramaic noun *šybt* – probably **šayyābat*⁷³ – has made clear that this noun is a cognate object⁷⁴ to be derived from the root *šwb*. Since the context of the clause is that of the restoration of the kingdom of KTK, the implied return is the return of the fate of this kingdom.⁷⁵ Biblical scholars have construed the Hebrew expression in the same manner ever since. This is elegantly

68 See already the LXXPs 126:1: ἐν τῷ ἐπιστρέψαι κύριον τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν Σιών; Vulgate: in convertendo Dominum captivitatem Sion facti; Targum: יתיב יהיה ית גלוות ציון, 'When the Lord makes the *exiles* of Zion return'; modern scholars: Ernst Preuschen, "Die Bedeutung von *šûb šbûṭ* im Alten Testamente," ZAW 15 (1895): 1–74; Ernst Baumann, "שוב שבות Eine exegetische Untersuchung," ZAW 47 (1929): 18.

69 Ernst Ludwig Dietrich, שוב שבות, *Die Endzeitliche Wiederherstellung bei den Propheten* (BZAW 40; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1925), 63.

70 Over 80 years after the first publication of this treaty the identity of this kingdom is still unknown; see recently: Nadav Na'aman, "Looking for KTK," WO 9 (1978): 220–39; Yutaka Ikeda, "Once again KTK in the Sefire Inscriptions," EI 24 (1993): 104–8; Robert M. Kerr, "Mibil - A Latin Reference to Punic curiae?," WO 36 (2006): 83–93.

71 KAI 222–224; see, e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967); André Lemaire and Jean-Marie Durand, *Les inscriptions araméennes de Sfiré et l'Assyrie de Shamshi-Illu* (Hautes Etudes Orientales 20; Genève, Paris: Droz, 1984).

72 KAI 224:24–25.

73 See Stanislav Segert, "Zur Schrift und Orthographie der altaramäischen Stelen von Sfire," ArOr 32 (1964): 126.

74 On the concept of cognate accusative, see Asya Pereltsvaig, "Cognate Objects in Modern and Biblical Hebrew," in *Themes in Arabic and Hebrew Syntax* (ed. Jamal Ou-halla and Uri Shlonsky; Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 107–36.

75 Jonas C. Greenfield, "Stylistic Aspects of the Sefire Treaty Inscriptions," *Acta Orientalia* 29 (1965): 4; Fitzmeyer, *Aramaic Inscriptions*, 119–20.

phrased by John Bracke: 'A model of restoration whose primary characteristic is God's reversal of his judgement.'⁷⁶

This implies that the expression *šûb šebûl* in Ps 126:1, as well as in verse 4, would refer to a mayor change, *Wende*, in the history of ancient Israel. Which turn is referred to is not *prima facie* clear. The tendency in scholarship to construe this turn as a reference to the return from exile, hints at a very probable identification. This identification, however, is not the only possibility. It certainly is not inevitable.

More important than an exact identification of this turn of fate is its function within the composition of the Psalm. In verse 4, the imperative *šûbā* hints at the language of prayer. The singer of the Psalm asks God to turn the fate of himself and his people. The description of the turn in verse one functions as an *argumentum ad deum*.⁷⁷ The divine act in the past functions as a plea for a divine act in the near future. The reference to the past is the ground of hope to entice YHWH to turn again the fate of his people.

In Ps 126:4–6 this forthcoming turn is compared with three images all derived from the world of agriculture. The first image is connected with a yearly experience in the wadi's of Southern Judah. These riverbeds are shrivelled up during the dry season, but whirling streams of water at the beginning of the rain-season.⁷⁸ As a result of intensive rainfall the abundance of water runs from the hills seeking its way through the wadis. This element from reality is used a few times metaphorically in the Hebrew Bible. In Job 6:15 the conduct of Job's kinsmen is compared to the whimsicality of the wadi: 'My brothers have acted deceitfully like a wadi, Like the torrents of wadis which vanish.'⁷⁹ Other texts

76 John M. Bracke, "*šûb šebûl*: A Reappraisal," ZAW 97 (1985): 233 (233–44); see already Beyerlin, *Wir sind wie Träumende*, 42–44; and Ina Willi-Plein, "*šwb šbt* - eine Wiedererwägung," ZAH 4 (1991): 55–71; Klaus Seybold, *Die Psalmen* (HAT 1/15; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 485; John Eaton, *Meditating on the Psalms: A Selection with New Translation and Inspirational Commentary* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 167; Thijs Booij, *Psalmen deel 4 de Prediking van het Oude Testament* (Kampen: Kok, 2009), 195–96; Blenkinsopp, *Judaism*, 37; Anselm C. Hagedorn, *Die Anderen im Spiegel: Israels Auseinandersetzung mit den Völkern in den Büchern Nahum, Zefanja, Obadja und Joel* (BZAW 414; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 269–70.

77 See Paul Sanders, "*Argumenta ad Deum* in the Plague Prayers of Mursili II and in the Book of Psalms," in *Psalms and Prayers: Papers Read at the Joint Meeting of the Society of Old Testament Study and Het Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland en België, Apeldoorn August 2006* (ed. Bob Becking and Eric Peels; OTS 55; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 181–217.

78 Ferdinand E. Deist, *The Material Culture in the Land of the Bible* (BiSe 70; Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2000), 125.

79 See also Isa 8:7; the same image is phrased differently in Isa 35:6–7.

take the dryness of the river-beds as a metaphor for existential loneliness.⁸⁰ In the context of Ps 126:4 the author applies the image as a reference for a new turn of fate.⁸¹ God is asked to implement this turn as quick and unexpected as the change in the wadis thus underpinning the great need for change that lives with the people.

Ps 126:5 offers another image: 'Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.' In an undisturbed agricultural cycle, reaping is the expected outcome of sowing. Due to fluctuations in the climate, arable farming in Ancient Israel was always vulnerable and hence the source of great challenges.⁸² In the religious understanding of reality any fissure of the expected outcome was construed as connected to divine acts. This is the basis for the so-called *futility curses*. These curses are attested in Deut 28 with many reflexes in the prophets.⁸³ Deut 28 offers the view that the breaking of the covenant by humans will cause a divine disruption of the reliability of reality. Human acts will become futile and not reach their expected outcome. See, e.g., Deut 28:30 'you shall plant a vineyard, but you shall not use its fruit.' In a series of *futility curses* in Mic 6 the line occurs: 'You will sow, but not reap.'⁸⁴ In my view, Ps 126:5 offers an inverted *futility curse*. Despite the sowing in tears, which hints at the absence of any expectation and could have been caused by drought as a result of which the dust made the eyes tear, the reaping will cause joy. Within the context of Ps 126 this change is presented as an outcome of the turn of the fate. To say the same a little bit more theologically: Where the curse is to be seen a sign of divine wrath, the inversion and abolition of the curse is to be seen as a sign of God's enduring love. Comparable remarks can be made about

80 E.g., Ps 42:2; Joel 1:20.

81 Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms* (WBC 21; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 172; Arnold A. Anderson, *Book of the Psalms* (NCB; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 865; differently Kraus, *Psalmen*, 1033.

82 Deist, *Material Culture*, 118.

83 Derek R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BeO 16; Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964); see also Thomas Podella, "Notzeit-Mythologem und Nichtigkeitsfluch," in *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Claus Koch; OBO 129; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, Göttingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 427–54; Hans Ulrich Steymans, *Deuteronomium 28 und die adê zur Thronfolgeregelung Asarhaddons: Segen und Fluch in Alten Orient und in Israel* (OBO 145; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, Göttingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); Paul A. Krüger, "A World Turned on its Head in ancient Near Eastern Prophetic Literature: A Powerful Strategy to Depict Chaotic Scenarios," *VT* 62 (2012): 58–76.

84 Mic 6:15; with Derek R. Hillers, *Micah: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 80–82.

the third image in Ps 126:6. In fact the images from verse 5 are repeated and expanded.

So far, I have treated the language of the second part of the Psalm as imaginary. It should, however, be noted that the choice of metaphors to express the hope of the people and to characterize the turn, is not fortuitous. I would like to opt for the possibility that Ps 126 is to be located in a period of drought. The metaphors in the second part of the anthem all are connected with the theme of drought and crop failure. In my opinion, the Psalm was composed in the middle of a human disaster and expresses the hope that God would once more turn the fate of the people.⁸⁵

Returning to the matrix mentioned above, I would like to state that Ps 126 encounters my questions as follows:

Is a reason for the drought given?	No.
Are the economic and social consequences of the drought presented?	Only implicitly in the imaginary used.
What role does God play in overcoming the drought?	God is seen as the one to overcome by turning the fate of his people.
What role are humans supposed to play in overcoming the drought?	None.
Which of the three approaches is dominant?	Basically acceptance, but the fact that God is prayed to change the situation indicates that the acceptance is not dressed in a patient meekness.

Figure 3
The matrix and Ps 126

85 See also Eaton, *Meditating on the Psalms*, 168.

7. Haggai 1

The book of Haggai can without any hesitation be construed as a post-exilic book.⁸⁶ The contents of the book connect it to the period of the rebuilding of the temple after the exile. Traditionally the rebuilding is dated in the reign of the Persian king Darius I Hystaspes (522–486), in 520 BCE.⁸⁷ This date, however, has turned out to be problematic. This view is based on the occurrence of the name of this Persian ruler in Hag 1:1; 2:1,11; Zech 1:1,7; 7:1 as well as on the assumption of an early return from exile and hence an early rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.⁸⁸ King Darius in Haggai and Zechariah is, however, not depicted in very specific terms. In Ezra 5, Hag-

86 See next to the well-known introductions to the Hebrew Bible, the survey by Mark J. Boda, "Majoring On the Minors: Recent Research On Haggai and Zechariah," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2 (2003): 33–68.

87 Thus the great majority of scholars, e.g., Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*; Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 47–50; Baruch Halpern, "A Historiographic Commentary on Ezra 1–6: Achronological Narrative and Dual Chronology in Israelite Historiography," in *The Hebrew Bible and its Interpreters* (ed. William H. Propp, Baruch Halpern, and D. Noel Freedman; Biblical and Judaic Studies, 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 81–142; Peter R. Bedford, "Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the "Delay" in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple," in *The Pitcher is Broken, Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy; JSOTSup 190; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995), 71–94; Marty E. Stevens, *Temples, Tithes, and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006), 50–58; Rainer Albertz, *Die Exilszeit 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Biblische Enzyklopädie 7; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2001), 102–12; Peter R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah* (JSJSup 65; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 183–299; Hans M. Barstad, "Haggai among the Prophets: An Example of Prophetic Continuity in the Hebrew Bible," in *Shai le-Sara Japhet, Studies in the Bible, its Exegesis and its Language* (ed. Moshe Bar-Asher, et al.; Jerusalem: the Bialik Institute, 2007), 265–83; Hurowitz, "Restoring the Temple"; Elie Assis, "Composition, Rhetoric, and Theology in Haggai 1:1–11," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 7 (2007) article 11, available online at www.jhsonline.org, and republished under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures IV* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 4; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2008), 309–21; Elie Assis, "To Build or Not to Build: a Dispute between Haggai and His People (Hag 1)," *ZAW* 119 (2007): 514 (514–27); Martin Hallaschka, *Haggai und Sacharja 1–8: Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (BZAW 411; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) dates the basic layer around 520 BCE; Tova Ganzel, "The Shattered Dream. The Prophecies of Joel: A Bridge between Ezekiel and Haggai?," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 11 (2011) article 6, available online at www.jhsonline.org, and republished under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VIII* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 19; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2013), 157–78.

88 For arguments against an early return, see Bob Becking, "'We all returned as One': Critical Notes on The Myth of the Mass Return," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 3–18.

gai and Zechariah are mentioned as prophets supportive to the rebuilding of the temple during the reign of Artaxerxes. I would therefore reinforce the view that Haggai is to be connected with the finalizing of the rebuilding of the temple in the reign of Darius II Ochus (424–405).⁸⁹

Haggai 1:11 contains the divine remark:

And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains,
on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil,
on what the ground produces,
on men, on cattle, and on all the labour of your hands.⁹⁰

This text is preceded by a prophetic text on fruitless prosperity⁹¹ and is followed by a report on the stirring up by God of the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the leader of the community which resulted in the completion of the rebuilding of the temple.⁹² In the prophetic text on fruitless prosperity, two themes are interwoven.⁹³ The one theme is

89 Thus already Josephus J. Scaliger, *Opus de emendatione temporum*, (Leiden: Officina Plantiniana apud Raphelengiis, 1583), V 224; see on him Anthony Grafton, "From De die natali to De emendatione temporum: The Origins and Setting of Scaliger's Chronology," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 48 (1985): 100–143; Benjamin Steiner, *Die Ordnung der Geschichte: Historische Tabellenwerke in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2008); Johannes Cocceius, *Commentarius in Prophetas Duodecim Minores* (Opera Omnia III; Amstelodamus: ex officina Johannis a Someren, 1673), 215; see also Luc Dequeker, "Darius the Persian and the Reconstruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4,24)," in *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Quaegebeur; Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 67–92. Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple*, dates the rebuilding of the temple late as well.

90 See, next to the many commentaries: Paul Redditt, "Themes in Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi," *Interpretation* 61 (2007): 192; Robertson, *Drought, Famine, Plague, and Pestilence*, 98; John Barton, "Reading the Prophets from an Environmental Perspective," in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Perspectives* (ed. David G. Horrell, et al.; London: T & T Clark, 2010), 50. It is interesting to observe that the hydrologist John W. Hernandez in an article reflecting on a period of drought in the middle Rio Grande River in New Mexico refers to Hag 1:11 in a side remark on "Drought: A meteorological Phenomenon or an Act of God," see John W. Hernandez, "An Analysis of the Drought of 1996 in the Middle Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico," *Natural Resource Journal* 39 (1999): 135–36; in fact his position to rely on the scholarly insights of hydrology is way of factual coping with drought, that seeks to overcome a more traditional acceptance approach.

91 Hag 1:4–10; see next to the commentaries Barstad, "Haggai among the Prophets," 275–78.

92 Hag 1:12–14; the question whether or not the temple laid in complete ruin or only was desolated as Barstad, "Haggai among the Prophets," 270–74, argues, will not be discussed here.

93 See esp. Elie Assis, "Composition, Rhetoric, and Theology in Haggai 1:1–11"; there is in my view no need to accept a complex redaction-historical process, *pace*, e.g., Jakob Wöhrle, "The Formation and Intention of the Haggai-Zechariah Corpus," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6 (2006) article 10, available online at www.jhsonline.org and re-

the observation that the community did not rebuild the temple of God in Jerusalem, although they had been rebuilding their own houses. The other theme is presented in a series of clauses that are close to the *futility curses* mentioned above.

You have sown much,	but harvest little;
you eat,	but there is not enough to be satisfied;
you drink,	but there is not enough to become drunk;
you put on clothing,	but no one is warm enough;
and he who earns,	earns wages to put into a purse with holes. ⁹⁴
And:	
You look for much,	but behold, it comes too little;
when you bring it home,	I blow it away. ⁹⁵

In my opinion, these lines describe the results of a drought that had hit the country and its community.⁹⁶ The dire situation is interpreted by Haggai as the direct result of not rebuilding the temple.⁹⁷ They give the image of a people hit by disaster and living in despair. Want, shortage, poverty, and deprivation are the key terms in this sorrowful picture. The situation of the community can easily be compared with the situation assumed in Neh 5, although I would not dare to suggest that both texts would refer to the same event. They only hint at the results of comparable events. In combining this picture with the reproach that the community failed to rebuild the temple of God, the prophet paves the way for the religious evaluation of the crisis. Hag 1:11 makes clear that God brought this drought over country and community in response of their delay in rebuilding the temple. Although the concept of sin or trespassing is seemingly interwoven in the fabric of Hag 1, the theme as such is not phrased in words from this semantic domain.⁹⁸

published under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures III* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 3; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2008), 287–302; Hallaschka, *Haggai und Sacharja* 1–8, 15–54.

94 Hag 1:6; see, e.g., Steymans, *Deuteronomium* 28, 160.

95 Hag 1:9.

96 I, therefore, disagree with Elie Assis, “Composition, Rhetoric, and Theology in Haggai 1:1–11”; Assis, “To Build or Not to Build,” who supposes two different disasters: an economic distress and a psychological-theological feeling of being abandoned by God.

97 See, Bedford, “Discerning the Time,” 74.

98 Some scholars explicitly mention ‘sin’ as a cause for drought, see, e.g., Barton, “Reading the Prophets from an Environmental Perspective,” 50–51.

It is be interesting to read Hag 1:11 in connection with the curses on the breaking of the covenant in Deut 28.⁹⁹ One of the curses is phrased as follows:

YHWH will smite you with perplexity
and with fever and with inflammation
and with fiery heat and with the sword
and with blight and with mildew,
and they shall pursue you until you perish.¹⁰⁰

The word translated here with 'sword' reads in Hebrew: *ḥereb*. In the Old Greek LXX this word is omitted. The Vulgate renders it with *aestu* 'with heat,' suggesting an original Hebrew *ḥorēb*, 'drought,' as does Targum Onqelos. Since 'sword' can easily be seen as a strange element in this context of words that are all one way or the other connected with the semantic field of disease and weather, it might well be that the Vulgate has transmitted the original meaning of the text.¹⁰¹ If that were true, Hag 1:11 is then intertextually referring to a pre-exilic curse on breaking the covenant. This interpretation would underscore the idea that the drought mentioned in Hag 1:11 would be the result of a divine act of wrath.¹⁰² Elie Assis reads Hag 1:10–11 in the co-text of Deut 11:14–15, 17 and arrives at a comparable conclusion. In Deut 11, 'rain-fall' is seen as a sign of divine blessing.¹⁰³ Comparing both texts makes clear that Haggai is apparently referring at the idea in Deuteronomy, but turning the image around: where rainfall was a blessing, drought is to be seen as a curse:

99 See also John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Michael Floyd; LHBOTS 475; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 1–39.

100 Deut 28:22; see Rintje Frankena, "The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy," *OTS* 14 (1965): 122–54; Steymans, *Deuteronomium* 28, 239–312; Virginia S. Daniel and Thomas M. Daniel, "Old Testament Biblical References to Tuberculosis," *Clinical Infection Diseases* 29 (1999): 1557–58, argue that *šaḥepet*, here rendered with 'perplexity,' would refer to tuberculosis.

101 See also: Steymans, *Deuteronomium* 28, 244–45; Robertson, *Drought, Famine, Plague, and Pestilence*, 59.

102 See also Robertson, *Drought, Famine, Plague, and Pestilence*, 98.

103 Elie Assis, "Composition, Rhetoric, and Theology in Haggai 1:1–11."

Haggai 1:11 And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the wine, the oil, on what the soil produces, on human beings and animals, and on all their labours.	Deuteronomy 11:14–15 Then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your animals, and you will eat your fill.
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The report on God stirring up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the leader of the community which resulted in the completion of the rebuilding of the temple indicates that Haggai succeeded in motivating not only the political and priestly leaders to take action. More importantly, he was able to move the wider population to start working on the rebuilding of the temple. By making clear the hard times the community had experienced was the divine judgement he helped them to cope with the situation of distress. The coping strategy of acceptance led to human actions to safeguard the future of the community.¹⁰⁴

Returning to the matrix mentioned above, I would like to state that Haggai 1 encounters my questions as follows:

Is a reason for the drought given?	Yes.
Are the economic and social consequences of the drought presented?	Yes in imaginary language.
What role does God play in overcoming the drought?	God will overcome the drought after the turn of the people.
What role are humans supposed to play in overcoming the drought?	Explicitly none, they are, however, to turn their egoistic ways.
Which of the three approaches is dominant?	Acceptance to see it as a divine act.

Figure 4.
The matrix and Haggai 1

8. Coping with Drought after the Exile

It is time for conclusions. The three texts analysed do not present a single and coherent way of coping with drought. What the text present is a variety of voices or—phrased differently—a variety of ways to cope

104 See also Alphonso Groenewald, “Post-exilic conflict as “possible” historical background to Psalm 69:10ab,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 61 (2005): 61.

with the disaster. The variety should be connected to the different positions of the authors in the religious landscape as well as their differing societal positions. Nehemiah 5 offers a practical solution to the problems from the point of view of an informal leader of the community. Psalm 126 offers hope for a worn out community. Haggai 1 prompts the audience to change their selfish conduct. All texts have a religious connection and are wanting a way out of the misery. The approach is mainly based on the acceptance strategy. The factual approach—in the sense of looking for solid information on the mechanics of disaster—is absent. The analysis of acceptance, by which is meant a more thorough understanding of the disruption as the result of a divine act, can, however, also be construed as a ‘factual approach.’ All three texts offer a way of coping that is not in need of reframing the image of God. All three texts offer a way of coping that eventually is based on the idea of the continuity of the community.

Adad's Overflowing Scourge and the Weather God of Zion: Observations on Motif History in Isa 28:14–18

REINHARD MÜLLER

Ancient Near Eastern cultures did not perceive the destructive power of water solely as a natural phenomenon.¹ Thinking of water always brought to mind a mythic dimension as well.² The masses of water surrounding the earth were regarded as chaotic³ entities that were trying to flood the dry land and destroy the habitable places. Giant snakes or dragons were thought to live in the waters, and the waters themselves were at times personified as gigantic monsters.⁴ Against this

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- 1 Ancient Near Eastern languages, including ancient Hebrew, did not possess distinct terms for “nature”; therefore they did not distinguish sharply between natural and cultural phenomena. Instead of the dichotomy between nature and culture, they referred to the opposition between the spheres of chaos and cosmos (or order), both of which included natural and cultural phenomena. The sphere of chaos comprised dangerous natural phenomena and destructive social powers, in particular acts of disloyalty leading to catastrophic wars, while the sphere of cosmos included, not only the political order represented by kingship, but also those parts of nature that were tamed by the gods and therefore integrated into the divine order of the world. See Fritz Stolz, *Weltbilder der Religionen: Kultur und Natur, Diesseits und Jenseits, Kontrollierbares und Unkontrollierbares* (Theophil 4; Zürich: Pano, 2001), esp. p. 144.
 - 2 According to Hans-Peter Müller, “Mythos und Metapher: Zur Ambivalenz des Mythischen in poetischer Gestaltung,” in *Wege zur Hebräischen Bibel: Denken – Sprache – Kultur. In memoriam Hans-Peter Müller* (ed. A. Lange and K. F. D. Römheld; FRLANT 228; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 73–93, esp. pp. 73–78, “myth” can be defined as a narrative (oral or written) about the origin of the world, humanity, and certain elements that aims at legitimizing the existence of these entities by explaining their meaning. Originally mythic narrations had a magical function, since they were told in order to guarantee the existence of these entities. Only when the legitimacy of the existing entities were no longer called into question, did the mythic narrations begin to serve as explanations of the world; for instance, cosmogonies became cosmologies.
 - 3 On the origin of the term “chaos” in ancient Greek and the justification of its application to concepts of the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible see Thomas Podella, “Der ‘Chaoskampfmythos’ im Alten Testament: Eine Problemanzeige,” in *Mesopotamica – Ugaritica – Biblica* (ed. M. Dietrich and O. Loretz; AOAT 232; Kevelaer: Ugarit Verlag, 1993), 283–329.
 - 4 See esp. B. Alster, “Tiamat תהום,” *DDD* 867–69.

background, the destructive energy that water may carry and embody was at times associated with gods who were imagined as defending the world against chaotic powers. In fact, the ability to protect the world from chaos was, in the Northwest Semitic regions in particular, ascribed to weather-gods who used destructive natural phenomena for their own battles; thunderstorms, flashes of lightning, hail and flooding rainfall were equated with their weapons. Therefore it can be said *cum grano salis* that the chaotic floods were thought to be driven back by other floods unleashed by a supreme deity.

These ambivalent thoughts about the destructive power of water had a potential political dimension. A famous example is a letter from the royal archive of Mari (A. 1968),⁵ which includes the oldest known textual attestation of the mythic battle against the sea.⁶ In this letter a servant of Zimrī-Lim, the last king of Mari (ca. 1774–1760?), reports a prophetic oracle of the weather-god Adad of Aleppo to the king. In this prophecy, the weather-god proclaims that he has not only anointed the king, but has also handed him the weapons by which he once smote the monstrous *têmtum*, the personified sea (ll. 2'–4'); additionally he reminds the king of his responsibility for justice (ll. 6'–11') and his obligation to consult an oracle before going to war (ll. 12'–17'). The reference to the divine weapons seems to have been related to a corresponding ritual. Another letter (A. 1858) attests that real cultic weapons, venerated as the weapons of Adad, were once brought to the temple of Dagan of Terqa, the religious centre of the empire.⁸ The idea that these weapons were sent to the king by the Halabean Adad is a remarkable *translatio imperii*. The king was entitled, henceforth, to use the god's weapons in order to wage war against his human enemies.

The political dimension of the Northwestern Semitic myth of the fighting weather-god, gives an important clue to some motifs of the ancient Hebrew prophecy of doom, in terms of religious history.⁹ In the

5 Edition: Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (SBLWAW 12; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 21–22.

6 On the origins of this myth and its variants see Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 226–37.

7 Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, 13.

8 See Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen*, 226–27 (n. 1568 for further textual references to these weapons), and Joanna Töyräänvuori, “Weapons of the Storm God in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Traditions,” *StudOr* 112 (2012): 147–80.

9 Cf. Reinhard Müller, “Der finstere Tag Jahwes: Zum kultischen Hintergrund von Am 5,18–20,” *ZAW* 122 (2010): 576–92.

following, this will be demonstrated in regards to Isa 28:14–18, an impressive poetic text, the literary core of which could go back to the prophet Isaiah of the late 8th century.¹⁰ In this text, imagery of the Assyrian weather-god Adad is merged with imagery of the weather-god Yhwh of Jerusalem.

1. The Literary History of Isa 28:14–18

It has often been observed that Isa 28:15–18 displays a kind of concentric structure.¹¹ The first part of v. 15 refers to a speech of the addressees about their covenant with “Death” (מוֹת) and “Netherworld” (שְׁאוֹל) that, in their opinion, protects them from an “overflowing scourge”¹² (שׁוֹט¹³)

10 Matthijs J. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (VTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 111; Friedhelm Hartenstein, “Tempelgründung als ‘fremdes Werk’: Beobachtungen zum ‘Ecksteinwort’ Jesaja 28,16–17,” in *Das Archiv des verborgenen Gottes: Studien zur Unheilsprophetie Jesajas und zur Zionstheologie der Psalmen in assyrischer Zeit* (Biblich-Theologische Studien 74; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011), 31–61, pp. 39–41, 56; Jan Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja: Studien zur Entstehung des Assur-Zyklus Jesaja 28–31* (WMANT 130; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011), 145; Reinhard Müller, *Ausgebliebene Einsicht: Jesajas “Verstockungsauftrag” (Jes 6,9–11) und die jüdische Politik am Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts* (Biblich-Theologische Studien 124; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2012), 57–62.

11 E.g., Jörg Barthel, *Prophetenwort und Geschichte: Die Jesajaüberlieferung in Jes 6–8 und 28–31* (FAT 19; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 312–13; Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 139–40; Hartenstein, “Tempelgründung als ‘fremdes Werk,’” 38.

12 In order to avoid the strange expression, Jakob Barth (*Etymologische Studien zum semitischen, insbesondere zum hebräischen Lexikon* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1893], 14, and “שׁוֹט שֹׁרֵר,” ZAW 33 [1913], 306–7) proposed a noun שׁוֹט “flood of water” (“stürmisch einherwogende Fluth”) in relation to Arabic and Ethiopic equivalents (see שׁוֹט II “outburst of water, flood” in DCH 8:304 [however with the remark “unless שׁוֹט I whip”] and שׁוֹט II “outburst, sudden spate of water” in HALOT 1441 [however evaluated as a “questionable lexeme”]); cf. Egyptian *štj* “to pour out” (WÄS 4.328–29; see Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* [18th ed.; ed. R. Meyer and H. Donner; Berlin: Springer, 1987–2010], 6:1333 s.v.). Yet, in light of the clearly attested meaning of שׁוֹט “whip” or “scourge,” (e.g., 1 Kgs 12:11; Nah 3:2) and the motif of Adad's whip in Akkadian iconography and literature (see below 2.), such an assumption is unnecessary (Gesenius, 18th ed., 6:1333 s.v.); for a critique of Barth's philological arguments see Hartmut Gese, “Die strömende Geißel des Hadad und Jesaja 28,15 und 18,” in *Archäologie und Altes Testament* (ed. A. Kuschke and E. Kutsch; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1970), 127–34, pp. 133–34.

13 With 1QIsa^a; the reading of MT, שׁוֹט “oar,” “rowing,” is in light of the parallel v. 18b probably due to a scribal error; see, e.g., Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 122–23.

שׁוֹטָף). This theme is resumed at the end of the passage (v. 18),¹⁴ in the context of an oracle of Yhwh that begins in v. 16. The last bicolon of v. 15 (v. 15bβ) contains a kind of explanation for this strange covenant: "For we have made a lie our refuge, / and in falsehood we have taken shelter." This theme is resumed in v. 17 where Yhwh announces that the refuge of lies will be destroyed. Thus, the word about the cornerstone that opens the divine oracle in v. 16 (after the messenger formula יהוה "therefore, thus says my lord Yhwh") is the central part of the concentric structure.

However, this structure explains the text only superficially. Although the themes are aligned roughly concentrically, the stylistic and poetic division does not entirely fit in with this order. The theme of the last bicolon of v. 15 (v. 15abβ) is resumed in v. 17 in two bicola, of which only the second (v. 17b) corresponds to v. 15abβ. The two themes of v. 15abα (covenant with "Death" and "overflowing scourge"), which are found in a bicolon (v. 15a) and a short prose sentence (v. 15ba),¹⁵ are resumed in v. 18 in parallel, and not concentric, order (v. 15a* // v. 18a; v. 15ba // v. 18b). In v. 16, in the core of the structure, a concentric alignment cannot be observed at all. The poetic division of the entire text is therefore unbalanced:

(v. 15aα)	כי אמרתם	Because you say:
	כרתנו ברית את מות	We have cut a covenant with Death,
(v. 15aβ)	ועם שאול עשינו חזה	and with Sheol we have made a treaty:
(v. 15ba)	שׁוֹטָף ¹⁶ כי יעבר ¹⁷ לא יבואנו	An overflowing scourge, when it passes through, it will not come to us!

14 Verse 19 probably opens a series of expansions that interpret the older text (e.g., Jacques Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique: Isaïe, I–XXXV, miroir d'un dé-mimillénaire d'expérience religieuse d'Israël* [EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1977–78], 1:396–99; Uwe Becker, *Jesaja – von der Botschaft zum Buch* (FRLANT 178; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 233; Willem A. M. Beuken, "Isaiah 28: Is It Only Schismatics That Drink Heavily? Beyond the Synchronic Versus Diachronic Controversy," in *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis* [OTS 34; Leiden: Brill, 1995], 15–38, pp. 26–27; Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 140).

15 BHS, according to the Masoretic accentuation, and classic commentaries (e.g., Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* [HKAT 3.1; 2d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902], 169, 171; Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39*, 1063–64), interpret vv. 15ba and 18b as bicola. It should not be overlooked, however, that both passages, in contrast to the surrounding text, do not contain synonymous parallelisms; therefore they should be read instead as short prose sentences. This stylistic variation could be related to the fact that v. 15 is designed as a pseudo-quotation of the addressees (see below 2).

16 See n. 13.

17 With 1QIsa^a; the reading of MT, עבר, is in light of the parallel v. 18b probably due to scribal haplography (e.g., Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 122–23).

(v. 15bβ)	כי שמנו כזב מחסנו ובשקר נסתרנו	For we have made a lie our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter.
(v. 16aα)	לכן כה אמר אדני יהוה	Therefore, thus says my lord Yhwh:
(v. 16aβ)	הנני יסד בציון אבן	Behold, I <will lay> ¹⁸ on Zion a stone,
(v. 16bα)	אבן בחן פנת יקרת מוסד מוסד	a fortress (?) ¹⁹ stone, a precious corner stone of an established fundament;
(v. 16bβ)	המאמין לא יחיש	the one who trusts will not hasten. ²⁰
(v. 17aα)	ושמתי משפט לקו	And I will make justice the measuring line
(v. 17aβ)	וצדקה למשקלת	and righteousness the plummet,
(v. 17bα)	ויעה ברד מחסה כזב	and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,
(v. 17bβ)	וסתר מים ישטפו	and waters will overflow the shelter.
(v. 18aα)	וכפר בריתכם את מות	And your covenant with Death will be atoned for,
(v. 18aβ)	וחזותכם את שאול לא תקום	and your vision with Sheol will not stand:
(v. 18b)	שוט שוטף כי יעבר והייתם לו למרמס	An overflowing scourge, when it passes through, you will be trampled down by it!

Several exegetes interpret the word about the foundation stone in v. 16, together with its immediate continuation in v. 17a about justice and righteousness as measuring line and plummet, as an addition.²¹ This passage interrupts the thematic line about the covenant with Death,

18 The consonants יסד are likely to be read as qal participle, like in 1QIsa^b (יִסֵּד). The Masoretic interpretation הֲנִי יֹסֵד "Behold, I am the one who has established," syntactically very awkward, seems to avoid the *futurum instans*; this could be due to the fact that such a future perspective is not consistent with a word of Isaiah spoken in a time when the First Temple still existed (Hartenstein, "Tempelgründung als 'fremdes Werk,'" 42).

19 According to Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (18th ed.), 1:137 s.v., בָּחַן is related to בָּחַן "fortress," "tower" (Isa 32:14), which is a loan word from Egyptian *bḥn.t* "gate building" (WÄS 1:471 s.v.).

20 See n. 85.

21 E.g., Kemper Fullerton, "The Stone of the Foundation," *AJS* 37 (1920/21), 1–50, pp. 35–40; Walter Dietrich, *Jesaja und die Politik* (BEvT 74; München: Chr. Kaiser, 1976), 165–66; Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique*, 1:392–95; Otto Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja: Kapitel 13–39* (ATD 18; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 198–99; Becker, *Jesaja*, 231; Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 140.

that is resumed only in v. 17b, and it seems to announce a forthcoming salvation of Zion that does not fit in with the harsh divine judgment that is predicted in vv. 17b–18. However, this reasoning is not entirely convincing. On the one hand, it is indeed peculiar that Yhwh does not immediately react to the sinister words of the addressees quoted in v. 15; the word about the cornerstone in v. 16 is clearly a thematic digression. On the other hand, v. 17b with the consecutive *qatal* form ויעה “and (hail) will sweep away” is syntactically closely connected to the *futurum instans* יסד הנני “Behold, I will²² lay” in v. 16 and its continuation ושמתי “and I will make” in v. 17a. Without the announcement of the foundation stone in v. 16, the form ויעה does not fit in with its context. The second argument, about a tension between v. 16 and vv. 17b–18, is rather weak. The divine judgment announced in v. 17b can also be interpreted as a purification since it destroys the refuge of lies, and such an act of purification does not necessarily contradict the announcement in v. 16 that Yhwh will soon establish a new fundament on Zion.

In addition, some details of the wording have to be taken into consideration. It should be noted that within the resumption of v. 15a in v. 18a, the word חזה that is used as a synonym of ברית²³ is replaced by חזות “vision.”²⁴ Verse 15a uses the prepositions את and עם, whereas v. 18a has only את.²⁵ And in v. 17b, only the word כזב “lie” is resumed from the last bicolon of v. 15 but not the synonymous term שקר “falsehood.” These differences speak against the assumption that vv. 15a and 18a were written by the same hand.

Based on all these observations it seems possible that the oracle of Yhwh introduced by v. 16aα originally consisted only of v. 18b.²⁶ This passage is not syntactically linked to the preceding sentences in vv. 16aβ–18a. It resumes the bold statement of the addressees regarding their safety from the “overflowing scourge” (v. 15), and it rejects this hope by way of a short and clear announcement:

22 See n. 18.

23 Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (18th ed.), 2:334 s.v., lists a noun חֶזֶק “covenant,” “treaty” in opposition to חֶזֶק “seer,” “prophet” (e.g., Amos 7:12; Mic 3:7; 1 Chr 21:9), which is obviously based on the synonymous parallelism in Isa 28:15a (cf. v. 18a); thus also HALOT 301 s.v. and DCH 3:182 s.v. This interpretation of חזה is in accordance with the ancient versions; cf., e.g., the LXX which translates σπονδαί “pacts.” The semantic reason why a treaty can be denoted by the word חזה (or חזות in v. 18) has not been clarified yet.

24 This is the only instance where חזות is used in this sense, see Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (18th ed.), 2:334 s.v.

25 This is corroborated by 1QIsa^a.

26 Müller, *Ausgebliebene Einsicht*, 58–59.

- (v. 16aα) לכן כה אמר אדני יהוה Therefore, thus says my lord Yhwh:
 (v. 18b) שוט שוטף כי יעבר An overflowing scourge, when it passes
 והייתם לו למרמס through, you will be trampled down by it!

Therefore, the word about the foundation stone in v. 16aβb could have been combined with vv. 17–18a in order to transform the short oracle of doom in v. 18b into an announcement of a purifying judgment connected to the laying of a new fundament on Zion.

Verse 14, by beginning with the adverbial לכן “therefore,” connects the ensuing text with the preceding vv. 7–13, the prophetic speech about drunken priests and prophets that contains the famous *šaw lāšāw*.²⁷ Since this connection does not fit in with the content of vv. 15–18—the presupposed situation and the motifs are quite different in each passage—scholars often take the word לכן to be a late addition inserted in order to connect two originally separate texts.²⁸ However, albeit theoretically possible, this assumption is methodologically difficult to corroborate since the word לכן causes no syntactic or logic tension within v. 14. In contrast, the entire v. 14 causes a tension with the ensuing verses. Verse 14 announces a divine message:

- לכן שמעו דבר יהוה Therefore, listen to the word of Yhwh,
 אנשי לצון you men of scoffing,
 משלי העם הזה rulers of this people
 אשר בירושלם who are in Jerusalem!

It can be expected that the word of Yhwh would begin immediately after this call to listen. However, a word of Yhwh in the strict sense is found only in vv. 16–18. To be sure, one could interpret v. 15 as a quotation of the rulers spoken by Yhwh himself, but it is strange that v. 16aα contains the messenger formula spoken by the prophet (לכן כה אמר אדני יהוה “Therefore, thus says my lord Yhwh”) as if there had been no preceding introduction of a divine oracle. In other words, after the call in v. 14 ... לכן שמעו דבר יהוה “Therefore, listen to the word of Yhwh ...,” the messenger formula in v. 16aα לכן כה אמר אדני יהוה “Therefore, thus says my lord Yhwh” is somewhat redundant. In addition, it should be noted that v. 16aα resumes the opening of v. 15:

27 On possible explanations of this mysterious phrase cf. Barthel, *Prophetenwort und Geschichte*, 297, and Hanna Liss, *Die unerhörte Prophetie: Kommunikative Strukturen prophetischer Rede im Buch Yesha'yahu* (Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 14; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2003), 122–23.

28 E.g., Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja 28–39: Das Buch, der Prophet und seine Botschaft* (BK 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 1063, 1068; Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 197, 199; Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 139.

term is related to the Syrian and North Mesopotamian weather-god Hadad / Adad.³² This relationship becomes clear based on iconographic and textual sources. Several Akkadian seals from the late third millennium, mainly from the periods of Naram-Sin and his successors, depict a weather-god standing on a lion-griffin,³³ and on some of them the god holds a whip to tame the griffin (fig. 1).³⁴ It seems likely that the whip was thought to be visible in flashes of lightning and audible in cracks of thunder.³⁵ An impressive Akkadian seal shows the ambivalence of the thunderstorm (fig. 2).³⁶ The god, swinging a whip with his left hand, rides on a chariot drawn by the lion griffin, depicting the frightening aspect of the thunderstorm; a naked goddess, however, holding streams of water in her hands, stands upon the griffin, and relates to the fertility given by abundant rain.³⁷ Later iconographic parallels to the lion-griffin can probably be identified with the flood monster *abūbu*,³⁸ and the image of the weather-god on the griffin corresponds to Adad's epithet *bēl abūbi* "lord of the flood" in later texts.³⁹

In the first millennium, Adad's whip⁴⁰ is attested in neo-Assyrian textual traditions. An Akkadian epithet of Adad, found twice in neo-

23:13]), or differing lexical explanations of שׁוּט (see n. 12), are obsolete in light of the ancient Near Eastern evidence.

32 Gese, "Die strömende Geißel des Hadad und Jesaja 28,15 und 18," 127–34, esp. 131–32.

33 Rainer Michael Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit* (Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie 4; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), 62–64, and fig. 115, 362, 363, 366–70; cf. Antoine Vanel, *L'iconographie du dieu de l'orage: Dans le proche-orient ancien jusqu'à VII^e siècle avant J.-C.* (CahRB 3; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1965), 18–28. Henri Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals: A Documentary Essay on the Art and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (London: Macmillan 1939), 124–25, was the first to note that the god on the lion-griffin can probably be identified with the weather-god Adad.

34 H. Waetzold, "Peitsche," *RIA* 10:382–86, p. 385. Other examples: Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit*, fig. 115, 369, 372.

35 Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen*, 598.

36 Silvia Schroer and Othmar Keel, *Die Ikonographie Palästinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern* (vol. 1; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005), commentary on no. 256.

37 For the chariot drawn by the lion griffin see also Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung der Glyptik während der Akkad-Zeit*, fig. 372 and 374, for the naked goddess on the griffin see also fig. 367 and 372.

38 Ursula Seidl, "Das Flut-Ungeheuer *abūbu*," *ZA* 88 (1998): 100–113.

39 References: Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen*, 706.

40 After the late third millennium, the motif of the weather-god's whip seems to disappear in iconography, and the lion griffin becomes separated from the weather-god (Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, 162–63).

Assyrian royal inscriptions, refers to his whip. On a votive stele of Shalmanezzer III, erected for the temple of Adad in the Assyrian city Kurba'il (ND 10000 = IM 60497), the god is invoked as the one "who bears a holy whip which churns up the seas" (*nāši qinnanzi elleti mu-sanbi' tāmāte*).⁴¹ On another votive stele of Adad, made by Adad-nērārī III and found in Saba'a (Istanbul 2828), this motif is related to the idea of divine judgment; the text invokes Adad as the one "who rides the great storms / (and) is clothed with fierce brilliance, / who lays low the evil, / who bears a holy whip, / who makes the lightning flash" (*rākib [ūm]ī rabūti / hālip melammē ez[zū]te / mušamqit lemnūti, / nāši qinnanzi elleti / mušabriq berqi*).⁴² The motif of the divine whip could also be connected to other gods;⁴³ for instance, the whip of Marduk is mentioned in a hymn to this god.⁴⁴

With regard to all this data, it becomes clear that the שוט שופך "overflowing scourge" in Isa 28:15 and 18 must refer to this imagery. To be sure, the Hebrew term relating to the iconographic and textual attestations of the divine whip is metonymically modified, since it alludes not to lightning or thunder but to overflowing rain. But it is nevertheless highly improbable that the peculiar Hebrew expression would have originated independently from the mythological background of the motif of a divine whip in connection with phenomena of thunderstorm and rain.

To understand the motif in Isa 28, it is most important to keep in mind that the imagery of the fighting weather-god served not only as a mythological explanation of natural phenomena; it had a political dimension as well. This is most impressively illustrated by neo-Assyrian inscriptions in which the king compares his power with manifestations of Adad. A good example is the Kurkh stele of Shalmanezzer III (BM 118884): "I felled their fighting men with the sword, rained down upon them flood as the god Adad would" (*mundahḫiṣṣunu ina ḡšakkī ušamqit kīma ḏAdad eliṣunu riḫilta ušaznin*).⁴⁵ The same imagery can be found in Sennacherib's inscriptions, for instance, on the Oriental Institute Prism (OIP 2): "Against all of the hosts of wicked enemies, I raised my voice, rumbling like a storm. Like Adad I roared" (*šēr gimir ummānāte nakirī*

41 RIMA 3:59 (A.0.102.12:3); see also Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen*, 598.

42 RIMA 3:208 (A.0.104.6:3–5); see also Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen*, 619.

43 In particular, Enlil, Ninurta, Nergal, and Shamash (H. Waetzold, *RIA* 10: 385).

44 KAR 304 (+) 337 (Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen*, 665, n. 5519).

45 RIMA 3:16 (A.0.102.2:45–46).

lemnūti ūmiš šarpiš alsâ kīma ^d*Adad ašgum*).⁴⁶ To be sure, in the Assyrian perspective this was only one possible way to conceptualize the military power of the king in mythic dimensions; the king could also depict himself in close connection to other gods and their weapons, in particular to Aššur and Ištar. It should be taken into consideration, however, that in the Northwest Semitic sphere the concept of the weather-god was much more dominant than in Mesopotamia proper; thus, the imagery of Adad, sometimes used by the Assyrian kings, must have had particular relevance to the Northwest Semitic cultures since their panthea were often dominated by local weather-gods.

It is probable that Isa 28:14–18* refers to a political dimension related to this backdrop. Those who are quoted in v. 15 do not want to be safe from overflowing rainfall; when referring to an “overflowing scourge,” they use an obvious metaphor for an overwhelming military power.⁴⁷ This is corroborated by Yhwh’s oracle in v. 18b. The announcement *והייתם לו למרמס* “you will be trampled down by it” does not fit in with the image of a scourge; in all likelihood it refers to an army,⁴⁸ and it is easy to surmise that the Assyrian army is meant.⁴⁹

The political dimension becomes even more evident in the first half of the statement put into the mouth of the addressees (v. 15a*)

(v. 15aα2)	כרתנו ברית את מות	We have cut a covenant with Death,
(v. 15aβ)	ועם שאול עשינו חזה	and with Sheol we have made a treaty:
(v. 15bα)	שוט ⁵⁰ שוטף כי יעבר ⁵¹ לא יבואנו	An overflowing scourge, when it passes through, it will not come to us!

Because of their treaty with “Death” and “Sheol,” the speakers claim to be protected from the destructive power of the “overflowing scourge.” What is the reason for this claim? From the perspective of religious history, it should first be noted that the terms *מות* and *שאול* probably refer to the west Semitic god Death and his realm.⁵² Both belong to the

46 OIP 2:44 (H2:V:74–75).

47 Hartenstein, “Tempelgründung als ‘fremdes Werk,’” 40–41.

48 Cf. *מרמס* in Isa 10:6 and *רמס* in Isa 28:3 and Ezek 26:11.

49 See n. 57.

50 See n. 13.

51 See n. 17.

52 Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Judah’s Covenant with Death (Isaiah XXVIII 14–22),” *VT* 50 (2000): 472–83, esp. 476–78.

sphere of chaos,⁵³ as is exemplarily revealed by an impressive lament in Ps 18:6:⁵⁴

The cords of Sheol (שאול) entangled me,
and the snares of Death (מות) confronted me.

Only the divine king is able to be rescued from these destructive powers (Ps 18:7):

In my distress I called upon Yhwh,
to my god I cried for help.
From his palace he heard my voice,
and my cry to him reached his ears.

Against this backdrop, it is not likely that the addressees of Isa 28:15–18* would have spoken the words quoted in v. 15* in reality; the statement turns out to be a polemical pseudo-quotation.⁵⁵ The author criticizes a real agreement of the political sphere by labeling it a treaty with the chaotic power of death. The historical covenant that is the object of this polemic must have been of a military nature, since it was obviously aimed at acquiring military protection from an overwhelming power that was expected to attack. Therefore three political parties must have been involved in the background of this text: 1) the addressees, 2) the military power symbolized by the scourge, and 3) the partners with whom the addressees made their covenant in order to be protected. This leads to the question of why the military power was expected to strike soon against the addressees. Was this an unjustified aggression? Or does the text imply that the reason for this aggression was that the addressees broke another covenant with this power?⁵⁶

The traditional dating of this text to the last years of the 8th century accords with the latter option; if ascribed to the prophet Isaiah, who criticized the anti-Assyrian policy of the Judean court in the years after the death of Sargon II, the words take on a clear historical sense.⁵⁷ The

53 J. F. Healey, "Mot מות," DDD 598–603, p. 601; pace H. M. Barstad, "Sheol שאול," DDD 768–70, p. 769.

54 Reinhard Müller, *Jahwe als Wettergott: Studien zur althebräischen Kultlyrik anhand ausgewählter Psalmen* (BZAW 387; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 39–40.

55 Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (Orte und Landschaften der Bibel 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 1:444.

56 Thus already Franz Delitzsch, *Biblischer Commentar über den Propheten Jesaja* (BC 3.1; Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1869), 319.

57 E.g., de Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets*, 111; Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 145; Müller, *Ausgebliebene Einsicht*, 61–62. Alternative proposals, according to which these words originated much later (e.g., Becker, *Jesaja*, 232–33), fail

Judeans rebelled against Assyria, and in the course of this revolt they probably tried to get military assistance from Egypt.⁵⁸ The covenant with Death and Sheol, which is so forcefully rejected by these words, could refer precisely to this political act.

Neo-Assyrian inscriptions contain a certain concept of military alliance comparable to the alleged covenant with Death and Sheol: the so-called *kitru*-alliance⁵⁹ which is mainly referred to in inscriptions from the Sargonid period.⁶⁰ In most instances this alliance is formed by enemies of the empire, often by former vassals who broke the covenant with the Assyrian king. The main purpose is to get military aid against the expected revenge of Assyria. As such, the *kitru*-alliance is described as opposed to holy alliances with the Assyrian king that are based on oaths and curses sworn to the Assyrian gods. An impressive example of such an unholy alliance, that implied the breach of the holy alliance with Assyria, can be found in Sennacherib's description of his campaign of 701; this account claims that the Ekronites made a *kitru*-alliance with Egypt (OIP 2):

The high officials, the nobles (and) the people of Ekron—who had thrown into fetters Paḏī, their king, who was loyal to the treaty and oath with Assyria (*bēl adē u mamūt ša māt Aššur*), and had him handed over to Hezekiah, the Judean, like an enemy—because of the villainous act they had committed, they became afraid. The kings of Egypt, troops, archers, chariots and the cavalry of the king of Nubia, an army beyond counting, they had called, and they formed an alliance and came to their assistance (*ikterūnimma illikū rēšūssun*).⁶¹

According to Mario Liverani, "*Kitru* is an element of perturbation, it belongs to the sphere of movement, of disorder, of innatural resistance against the constitution of an orderly cosmos, and it is realized through activities of movement and chiefly of war."⁶² "The enemy belongs to the peripheral world of chaos, of confused plurality, his attempt to

to explain the peculiar motif of the overflowing scourge and the logic of its connection to the supposed covenant with Death and Sheol.

58 William R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (SHCANE 18; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 127; Bernd Ulrich Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit: Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems* (OBO 170; Freiburg: Universitäts-Verlag, 1999), 205–17.

59 See Mario Liverani, "*kitru, katāru*," *Mesopotamia* 17 (1982): 43–66.

60 Liverani, "*kitru, katāru*," 47–48.

61 OIP 2:31 (col. II 73–81), translation (with minor changes) from Walter Mayer, "Sennacherib's Campaign of 701 BCE: The Assyrian View," in '*Like a Bird in a Cage*': *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 363; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 168–200, p. 189.

62 Liverani, "*kitru, katāru*," 58.

The conclusion of the statement that the addressees allegedly made (v. 15bβ) fits in with this picture. The terms כֹּזֵב “lie” and שֶׁקֶר “falsehood” are rooted in wisdom literature; in several cases they refer to the judicial sphere.⁶⁴ There is a proverb about the futility of taking refuge in lies that is rather similar to the pseudo-quotation of Isa 28:15 (Prov 19:5): “A false witness will not be unpunished, / and the one who testifies lies will not be rescued.”⁶⁵ It is easy to imagine that this judicial use of the terms כֹּזֵב and שֶׁקֶר could be applied to political covenants as well. In the Aramaic treaty of the steles from Sfire, the Aramaic verb שֶׁקֶר “to lie” is repeatedly used to denote the breach of the treaty.⁶⁶ Neo-Assyrian inscriptions often explicitly describe the *kitru*-alliances as related to lies and treason⁶⁷, which refers to the fact that the breach of their holy alliances with Assyria meant indeed that the vassals had once sworn false oaths. Therefore Assyria’s enemies are repeatedly characterized as treacherous liars.⁶⁸ Isaiah 28:15 stands strikingly close to the Assyrian perspective.

(v. 18b) שוט שוטף כי יעבר והייתם לו
 למרמס An overflowing scourge, when it
 passes through, you will be trampled
 down by it!

The covenant with Death will provide no military protection from the scourge. Yhwh will not protect the addressees. In this context it should be noted that the Assyrian vassal treaties were concluded under the auspices not only of the Assyrian gods, but also of “all the gods of the

68 Frederick Mario Fales, "The Enemy in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: 'The Moral Judgment,'" in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im alten Vorderasien vom 4. – 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (ed. Hans-Jörg Nissen and Johannes Renger; Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 1; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1982), 425–35, p. 429.

lands,"⁶⁹ including, in particular, the local gods of the vassals.⁷⁰ It is not impossible that Judah's loyalty to Assyria had been sworn to Yhwh of Jerusalem as well.⁷¹

At this point the relationship between Yhwh and the "overflowing scourge" has to be taken into consideration. According to the oracle, Yhwh seems to remain passive, since he announces that he will do nothing to protect the addressees from the scourge. However, it should be noted that Yhwh himself, in his origins, belonged to the Northwest Semitic weather-gods;⁷² many motifs in the oldest Psalms depict Yhwh as a local Palestinian weather-god.⁷³ An impressive example is Ps 77:17–18; this passage portrays Yhwh as an archer driving a chariot through the thunderstorm:⁷⁴

The clouds poured out water,
the skies thundered,
your arrows flashed on every side.

The crash of your thunder was at the wheel,
your flashes of lightning lit up the world,
the earth trembled and shook.

Regarding this imagery and its background in ancient Near Eastern iconography, one can ask if Yhwh is, in Isa 28:18b, indeed as passive as he seems at first glance. Or, to phrase it as a provocative question: Who really swings the "overflowing scourge," an (As-)Syrian Adad or the Yhwh from Jerusalem?

Two other oracles from the book of Isaiah have to be considered. In Isa 28:2, the imagery of the thunderstorm is depicted in vivid colours; at the same time, the political dimension once again becomes clear:

69 SAA 2:29–30, § 2–3 (Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty).

70 SAA 2:27, IV 6', 10'–13' (Esarhaddon's Treaty with Baal, King of Tyre).

71 Friedhelm Hartenstein, "Unheilsprophetie und Herrschaftsrepräsentation: Zur Rezeption assyrischer Propaganda im antiken Juda (8./7. Jh. v.Chr.)," in *Das Archiv des verborgenen Gottes: Studien zur Unheilsprophetie Jesajas und zur Zionstheologie der Psalmen in assyrischer Zeit* (Biblisch-Theologische Studien 74; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011), 63–96, pp. 72–73; Müller, *Ausgebliebene Einsicht*, 78–79.

72 E.g., M. Weippert, "Jahwe," *RIA* 5:246–53, p. 252; Ernst Axel Knauf, "Yahwe," *VT* 34 (1984): 467–72, p. 469; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, "The Elusive Essence: YHWH, El and Baal and the Distinctiveness of Israelite Faith," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte* (ed. E. Blum; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 393–417, pp. 407–410; Mark S. Smith, *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 106–7; K. van der Toorn, "Yhwh יהוה," *DDD* 910–19, p. 916.

73 Müller, *Jahwe als Wettergott*, passim.

74 *Ibid.*, 53–59.

Behold, my lord has one who is mighty and strong,
like a rain of hail, a tempest of destruction,
like a rain of mighty, overflowing waters,
he hurled down to the earth with a hand.

This announcement continues the woe-oracle in Isa 28:1, which is directed against the kingdom of Samaria and has to be dated, in all likelihood, immediately prior to Samaria's downfall.⁷⁵ It is probable that "the one who is mighty and strong, ... like a rain of overflowing waters" is none other than the Assyrian king;⁷⁶ Isaiah 28:2 is a rather close parallel to the self-presentations of the Assyrian kings as quoted above.

A prophetic announcement in Isa 30:30 depicts Yhwh explicitly as a fighting weather-god:

And Yhwh will cause his majestic voice to be heard,
and the descending blow of his arm to be seen,
in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire,
with a cloudburst and rain and hailstones.

From the context in Isa 30:27–33, it becomes clear that this word refers to the downfall of Ashur (see v. 31), which indicates that this word has to be dated much later than Isa 28:1–4* and Isa 28:14–18*, namely to the end of the 7th century.⁷⁷ Isaiah 28:14–18* stands nearer to Isa 28:1–4* than to Isa 30:30, both chronologically and conceptually; the oracle about the overflowing scourge still belongs to the 8th century, and it does not explicitly say that Yhwh himself is acting as a fighting weather-god. Yet, when it implies that he unleashes a political power symbolized in the imagery of the destructive thunderstorm, it is nevertheless related to the aspects of the weather-god that are included in Yhwh's character.⁷⁸

3. The New Temple of the Weather-God on Mount Zion

Through the insertion of vv. 16aßb–18a, the structure and the meaning of the passage has been substantially altered. In the resulting text, the divine act of laying a foundation in Zion is at the centre (v. 16). It

75 Becker, *Jesaja*, 227–28; Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 90–92.

76 Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 85–89.

77 Hermann Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte der Josiazeit: Israel und Assur als Thema einer produktiven Neuinterpretation der Jesajaüberlieferung* (WMANT 48; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977), 101–3.

78 Cf. Kreuch, *Unheil und Heil bei Jesaja*, 89, on Isa 28:2.

should not be overlooked, however, that in connection to this divine building activity, Yhwh uses the destructive power of a thunderstorm:

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|--|
| (v. 17aα) | ושמתי משפט לקו | And I will make justice the measuring line |
| (v. 17aβ) | וצדקה למשקלת | and righteousness the plummet, |
| (v. 17bα) | ויעה ברד מחסה כזב | and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, |
| (v. 17bβ) | וסתר מים ישטפו | and waters will overflow the shelter. |

This announcement seems to be inspired by the image of the overflowing scourge, as indicated by the use of the verb שטף “to overflow.” In the near future, Yhwh will destroy the treacherous shelter by means of these powerful weather phenomena.

It is surprising that v. 17 resumes traditional imagery of the weather-god as king. This becomes clear when Isa 28:17 is compared with Ps 97:2–3, a passage of an ancient hymn about the divine king:⁷⁹

Clouds and thick darkness are around him,
 righteousness and justice (צדק ומשפט) are the foundations of his throne.
 Fire goes before him
 and consumes his adversaries on every side.

The Psalm does not explicitly say who these adversaries are, yet it is probable that they belong to the sphere of chaos and are imagined as trying to destroy the order of the world, to which the terms צדק and משפט refer.⁸⁰ A similar combination of motifs occurs in Isa 28:16–17. Yhwh announces that he will soon lay a new fundament on Zion and build upon it, using משפט and צדקה as measuring line and plummet. This metaphorical use of משפט and צדקה is connected to the announcement that the weather phenomena of hail and overflowing rain will sweep away everything false that was built by human hands upon this moun-

79 Edward Lipiński, *La royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et la culte de l'ancien Israël* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1965), 173–275; Oswald Loretz, *Ugarit-Texte und Thronbesteigungspsalmen: Die Metamorphose des Regenspenders Baal-Jahwe* (Ps 24,7–10; 29; 47; 93; 95–100 sowie Ps 77,17–20; 114) (UBL 7; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1988), 331–48; Christoph Levin, “Das Gebetbuch der Gerechten,” in *Fortschreibungen: Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (BZAW 316; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 291–313, pp. 299–300; Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *Reste hebräischen Heidentums am Beispiel der Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 27–65, (50–51); Martin Leuenberger, *Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter: Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Redaktion der theokratischen Bücher IV–V im Psalter* (ATANT 83; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004), 158 n. 107; Müller, *Jahwe als Wettergott*, 93–102.

80 Müller, *Jahwe als Wettergott*, 100–101.

tain. This purifying judgment transfers the divine victory over chaotic adversaries to the ethical sphere. In terms of redaction history, this could be related to the final passage of the song of the vineyard in Isa 5:7 where the parallel terms משפט and צדקה are introduced into the book of Isaiah:

And he hoped for justice (משפט), but behold, there was bloodshed, righteousness (צדקה), but there was crying.

An interesting detail in Isa 28:17 is the verb that denotes the destructive energy of the hail. יעה, a *hapax legomenon*, is the root of the noun יעים which denotes a certain kind of “cultic shovels” that seem to have been used to remove the ashes from the altar.⁸¹ Therefore this passage could aim to suggest an analogy between the cultic cleaning of the altar and the cleaning of Zion from all falsehood. This may correspond to the peculiar use of the verb כפר *pu'al* “to be atoned for” for the annulling of the covenant with Death. כפר *pu'al* is, in this context, usually not interpreted in a cultic way (i.e., “to be covered” or “to be removed”⁸²),⁸³ but such a meaning would be in contrast to the use of this verb in Isa 6:7 and 22:14, and is attested nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. It is therefore not impossible that כפר *pu'al* in Isa 28:18a has basically the same meaning as in all other instances.⁸⁴ This passage could announce that the false and deathly covenant, in the course of Yhwh’s purifying judgment after his laying of a new fundament on Zion, will be atoned for in a special cultic act.

The intricate syntactical, semantical and poetological problems of v. 16 cannot be dealt with here at length.⁸⁵ Given the conventional interpretation of the phrase המאמין לא יהיש as “the one who trusts will not hasten,” a literary connection to the famous saying of Isa 7:9 אִם לֹא תִאֱמִינוּ כִּי לֹא תִקְוּ / “if you do not trust, / you will not be established” seems probable.⁸⁶

In general, the announcement of v. 16 that Yhwh will, in the near future, lay a fundament on Zion, obviously in order to build upon it (as

81 E.g., Exod 27:3; 1 Kgs 7:40; 2 Kgs 25:14; 2 Chr 4:11.

82 Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (18th ed.), 3:567 s.v.

83 E.g., Wildberger, *Jesaja* 28–39, 1078.

84 Thus DCH 4:456 s.v.

85 Therefore, the Masoretic interpretation of v. 16 is kept in the translation given above (1.); an important proposal for a different syntactical division, with consequences for the interpretation of this verse in terms of religious history, has been made by Hartenstein, “Tempelgründung als ‘fremdes Werk,’” 42–45.

86 Becker, *Jesaja*, 232.

indicated by his use of measuring line and plummet), can most easily be explained as referring to the building of the Second Temple during the Persian period, since the laying of a fundament presupposes a preceding destruction (cf. the oracle in Zech 4:7).⁸⁷ The expansion of Isa 28:15–18* by vv. 16aβ–18a indicates that in the Zion theology of this time, the ancient imagery of the kingly weather-god was still an important aspect of the human conception of the divine.

4. Conclusions

The original layer of Isa 28:14–18, which can probably be found in vv. 15, 16aα, and 18b, is in all likelihood related to the political constellation between Judah and Assyria in the late 8th century BCE. The peculiar mention of שוט שוטף “an overflowing scourge” alludes to the mythological imagery of the fighting weather-god, and effectively refers to the overwhelming power of the neo-Assyrian army. By insinuating that the addressees concluded a covenant with the chaotic powers of Death and Sheol in order to be protected from the scourge, the text, which seems to reflect an analogous prophetic speech, strongly criticizes its addressees for seeking military aid from a third party, presumably Egypt. Yhwh’s oracle (vv. 16aα, 18b) makes it clear that there will be no safety from the advancing “overflowing scourge.” Thus, the text stands strikingly close to the Assyrian view of disloyal vassals. This could be due to the fact that the Judean leaders probably had sworn their oath of loyalty to Assyria, not only to the Assyrian gods, but also to their own god, Yhwh of Jerusalem. From this perspective, a breach of the oath meant disloyalty not only to the Assyrian king but also to Yhwh. Therefore, Yhwh’s oracle probably implies that he is the one who unleashes the destructive power of the overflowing scourge. Since he possessed features of a Palestinian weather-god, his image could, in this text, even merge into the image of the Assyrian weather-god Adad.

By inserting vv. 16aβ–18a, the prophecy of doom was transformed into an announcement of a purifying judgment, in the course of which Yhwh lays a new fundament on Zion. On this level, the imagery of the kingly weather-god is particularly related to divine acts of purifying. Yhwh uses righteousness and justice, originally referring to the order of the world established by divine kingship, as measuring line and plummet, which opens an ethical dimension (cf. Isa 5:7), and he sends

87 Ibid., 232–33.

hail and overflowing rain to sweep away the refuge of falsehood. This is possibly connected to the announcement of a certain cultic act that atones for the covenant with Death and Sheol. This transformation of the original oracle of doom can be explained best as a reference to the erection of the Second Temple during the Persian period.



Figure 1

Cylinder seal from Nippur, late Akkadian, 18 N 174, drawing: McGuire Gibson and Augusta McMahon, "Investigation of the Early Dynastic-Akkadian Transition: Report of the 18th and 19th Seasons of Excavation in Area WF, Nippur," *Iraq* 57 (1995), 1–39, p. 15, fig. 13:1.



Figure 2

Cylinder seal, Akkadian (2350–2150 BCE), Piermont Morgan 220; drawing: Othmar Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen* (5th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 41, no. 44.

Thinking of Water in the Book of Job: A Fluvial Introduction to the Job Literature

URMAS NÖMMIK¹

1. The Book of Job as a Treasure Trove of Water Related Vocabulary

In the Masoretic version of *Codex Leningradensis* of the book of Job, the word ‘water’ מַיִם occurs twenty-five times: 3:24; 5:10; 8:11; 9:30; 11:16; 12:15; 14:9, 11, 19; 15:16; 22:7, 11; 24:18, 19; 26:5, 8, 10; 27:20; 28:25; 29:19; 34:7; 36:27; 37:10; 38:30, 34. Five records are unsure due to complicated textual condition: 9:30; 24:18, 19; 27:20; 36:27. Compared to the more than five hundred times of mentioning ‘water’ in the Hebrew Bible, more than twenty in the book of Job is not more or less than usual.² But if one adds all possible vocabulary regarding phenomena related to water, one arrives at a remarkably long list of—often very rare—terms. In the following, a catalogue of them will be presented.

First, precipitation or atmospheric water phenomena occur in multiple forms:

1. מָטָר ‘rain’ (5:10; 28:26; 29:23; 36:27; 37:6; 38:28);
2. מָטַר hif. ‘to let rain’ (20:23; 38:26);
3. שֶׁלֶג ‘snow’ (6:16; 24:19; 37:6; 38:22);³
4. בָּרָד ‘hail’ (38:22);
5. נוֹל ‘to trickle, flow’ (36:28);

related to them also are:

6. קָוָה ‘ice’ (6:16; 37:10; 38:29);
7. שָׁחַק ‘cloud’ (36:28);⁴
8. עָב ‘cloud’ (26:8; 37:11; 38:34);⁵

1 I am grateful to the organizers of the meeting in Edmonton. The article is written with the aid of the Estonian Science Foundation research grants nos. ETF8665 and ETF9279.

2 R.E. Clements and H.-J. Fabry, “מַיִם *majim*,” *ThWAT* 4:843–66 (844).

3 In 24:19 the word is probably corrupt; see note 60.

4 In other passages (35:5; 37:18, 21; 38:37), the word is not related to precipitation.

5 In 20:6; 22:14; 30:15; 36:29; 37:16, the word has another context than rain.

9. עָנָן 'cloud' (26:8);⁶

a number of rare words accompanies them:

10. נָטַף 'to drop' (29:22);
11. נָטַף 'drop' (36:27 hapax);
12. רָעַף 'to drop' (36:28);
13. אָגַל 'drop' (38:28 hapax);
14. סָפִיחַ 'outpouring' (14:19 hapax);
15. יָרַם 'rain' accompanied by incessant thunder (24:8);
16. טַל 'dew, light rain' (29:19; 38:28);
17. מְלָקוֹשׁ 'latter-rain, spring-rain' (29:23);
18. קָפֹר 'hoar frost' in connection with heaven (38:29);
19. יֵרִי 'moisture' (37:11);

several bodies of water are named in the book, dominated by the word for sea twelve times:

20. יָם 'sea' (6:3; 7:12; 9:8; 11:9; 12:8; 14:11; 26:12; 28:14; 36:27; 38:8; 38:16; 41:23);⁸
21. נָהָר 'river' (14:11; 22:16; 28:11; 40:23);⁹
22. נַחַל 'wady, torrent, stream' (6:15; 20:17; 22:24; 40:22);¹⁰
23. יַרְדֵּן once also for a 'river' (40:23);
24. תְּהוֹמוֹת 'primeval oceans' or 'subterranean water' (28:14; 38:16, 30; 41:24);

the list includes also rare words:

25. פְּלִיגָה 'water-course' (20:17);
26. אֵד 'subterranean stream of water' or 'abyss' (36:27, 30¹¹);
27. שִׁטְף 'flood' (38:25);
28. אֶפְיק 'channel, stream-bed' (6:15);¹²

in addition, marsh is named twice:

29. בְּצֵה 'marsh, oozy place' (8:11; 40:21);

6 Other passages 7:9; 26:9; 37:11, 15; 38:9 do not relate to rain.

7 Text changed from מִים into מִיָּם; see further below, and note 50.

8 In 36:30 יָם is highly unlikely, and is mostly changed into יָרִים; some question יָם in 9:8 because of few manuscripts reading עָב; in 3:8 יָם is often changed into יָם, but Oswald Loretz, "„Schwarze Magie“ des Tages in Hi 3,8 und KTU 1.6 VI 45b–53; 1.14 I 19–20; 1.4 VII 54–56. Zur Überlieferung der „schwarzen Magie“ in Altsyrien-Palästina," *UF* 32 (2000): 261–87, argues with good reasons against it.

9 Textual problems in 20:17 make נָהָר unlikely; it can be deleted or changed into יַעֲקֹר.

10 Further in 21:33 and 28:4 the word occurs in the meaning 'shaft,' and in 30:6 as 'valley.'

11 In 36:30 the word אֵד is often conjugated into אֵדוֹ.

12 In 40:18 and 41:7, the word bears other meanings.

furthermore, one word known elsewhere in the Bible, and two hypothetical words have been reconstructed:

30. שֶׁלֶח 'torrent' (24:19);¹³

31. מִכְךָ* as Ugaritic *mbk* for a 'place of trickling' (in mine) (28:11);¹⁴

32. נִבְכָּךְ* as Ugaritic *nbk* for a 'source' (for the sea) (38:16).¹⁵

Several other verbs could be mentioned here, since poetry offers a number of possibilities to contextualize water phenomena. Only one hapax word זֶרַב 'to become waterless' (6:17) should be noted here to signal that not all the vocabulary, especially connected to drying out, has been referred to above.

What really strikes every reader of the book of Job is the deeply ambivalent and multivalent use of terminology concerning water and water phenomena. Equally noticeable is the fact that the notion 'water' is represented in all the main literary layers of the book, not to mention the other above listed words. In the following, a small fluvial introduction to the book of Job, to its wisdom and poetry, as well as to its literary and redaction history is an attempt worth trying.

The book of Job has significantly grown in the course of two to three hundred years.¹⁶ The basic layer was the original Dialogue of Job, a poetic and wisdom work of its own genre in the Hebrew Bible that has been a source of inspiration for generations of scribes and a number of respective additions. The frame prose story has been added in a rela-

13 So according to Markus Witte, *Philologische Notizen zu Hiob 21–27* (BZAW 234; Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 107–8; see also note 60.

14 So Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (ed. R. Meyer and H. Donner; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987–2010), 624.

15 Gesenius, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch*, 774.

16 Most actual introductions are always a desideratum, but generally advisable are those in commentaries by John Gray, *The Book of Job* (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2010); David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20* (WBC 17; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989); Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (OTL; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985); John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), and Georg Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (KAT 16; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963). Detailed redaction historical questions are discussed esp. by Markus Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre. Der dritte Redegang (Hiob 21–27) und die Redaktionsgeschichte des Hiobbuches* (BZAW 230; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994); Wolf-Dieter Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt. Die Prosatexte des Hiobbuches und ihre Rolle in seiner Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte* (BZAW 336; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); Jürgen van Oorschot, "Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches," in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretation. Beiträge zum Hiob-Symposium auf dem Monte Verità vom 14.–19. August 2005* (ed. T. Krüger, et al.; ATANT 88; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2007), 165–84; it is worth to consult also a small but rich book by Otto Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob. Übersetzt und eingeleitet* (Stuttgart: Radius, 2006), 99–123.

tively early stadium of development.¹⁷ Hand in hand with it, the speeches of the fourth friend Elihu, chs. 32–37, became part of the book.¹⁸ Three redaction layers expanding the book in many of its parts have significantly changed its outlook and been marked for the first time by Markus Witte,¹⁹ unfortunately too seldom taken into consideration by current scholarship. A majesty redaction (Majestätsbearbeitung), a righteousness redaction (Gerechtigkeitsbearbeitung) and a lowliness redaction (Niedrigkeitsbearbeitung) are those.²⁰ Some other layers have been maintained afterwards, e.g., an innocence extrapolation (Unschuldserweiterung) and late redactors (späte Bearbeiter) by Otto Kaiser²¹ or a fear-of-God redaction (Gottesfurcht-Redaktion) by Jürgen van Oorschot.²² A further author who was concerned with transitory nature of human life should probably be added (for the first time), since some parts of the speeches of Job (esp. in ch. 7 or 14) cannot be explained otherwise.

The chronological and intertextual relationship between additional layers is still debatable. As shown by van Oorschot, there are good reasons to claim that the majesty (fear-of-God) and righteousness redactions are older than the lowliness redaction, despite the fact that Witte and Kaiser date the lowliness redaction as the earliest, Kaiser even earlier than Elihu's speeches.²³ Furthermore, at least the righteousness layer is so extensive that it can be handled as a longer devel-

17 Cf. Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt*; despite this newer tendency in the study of the book, however, there are enough scholars advocating the earlier character of the frame story.

18 The speeches of Elihu together with ch. 28 are most often considered to be secondary layers; see esp. Harald-Martin Wahl, *Der gerechte Schöpfer. Eine redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Untersuchung der Elihureden – Hiob 32–37* (BZAW 207; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993).

19 Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*.

20 English translations of German notions are open to discussion: Carol A. Newsom, "Re-considering Job," *CBR* 5 (2007): 155–82, translates with given notions, but also "abasement redaction" and "exaltation redaction" respectively are possible (I thank William S. Morrow for advice).

21 Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 115; he has been preceded by observations made by Syring (*Hiob und sein Anwalt*, 139–142, 168).

22 Van Oorschot, "Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches," 176–79; in his eyes, the redaction is similar to the majesty redaction maintained by Witte.

23 Cf. van Oorschot, "Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches," 175–84, and Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 194–221; Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 116. Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt*, 143–47, 168, positions Elihu's speeches even prior to the complementing the poem with the frame story.

opment probably spreading over several generations.²⁴ Nevertheless, it can be taken for granted that these younger layers have distinct profiles and that they surmount the poetological and conceptual framework of original speeches. The discussion on a new level has only started, basic redaction tendencies have been marked, but a coherent literary history of the book is still waiting for reconstruction.²⁵ In the following, only an outline of basic layers will be presupposed, the emphasis will be on the dynamics of water metaphors in the redaction history of the book.

The beginnings of the book of Job should be located at the end of the Persian period. It is likely that the original dialogue was written in the (fifth-)fourth century BCE. Its intertextual relation to other biblical texts and a considerable amount of back-and-forth allusions allows suggesting a position in the middle of the redaction history of the Hebrew Bible. The massive growing process of the book and its relation to other parts of the Hebrew Bible, as well as to its first translations, permit a dating of the youngest additions into the second century BCE.²⁶

2. Absence of Water in the Frame Story

Regardless of the answer to the question, whether the basic layer of the prose frame story existed prior to the original dialogue or not, it was supplemented to the poem and not vice versa. As has been maintained

24 E.g., some poetological variations, a likely cumulation of several layers and glosses in ch. 24 as well as the hypothesis of many redactional hands in the Psalms hinting at different scribal groups behind אֲכִיזַיִם the 'needy,' צַדִּיקִים the 'righteous' and עֲנִיִּים the 'humble' could attest more than one scribal hand for the righteous extrapolations also in the book of Job. One reason to maintain the relatively earlier character of the given redaction is the observation that the righteous צַדִּיקִים and the godless רָשָׁעִים so directly opposed in Psalms and Proverbs, are contrasted only once in the book of Job (22:18–19) but also there they do not belong to the same layer; cf. Witte *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 86–87; Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 43; and Urmas Nömmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs. Eine form- und traditionsgeschichtliche Studie* (BZAW 410; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 50–51.

25 That there is further space for discussions, can be proved by J. Vermeylen who already in 1986 has reconstructed a three-step redactional model of the book of Job where even more passages than Witte or others have been marked as secondary; see his *Job, ses amis et son Dieu. La légende de Job et ses relectures postexiliques* (SB 2; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986).

26 Dating issues are still open to debate; but see esp. Avi Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered," *HTR* 67 (1974): 17–34; Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, and Konrad Schmid, "The Authors of Job and Their Historical and Social Setting," in *Scribes, Sages, and Seers. The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World* (ed. L.G. Perdue; FRLANT 219; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 145–53.

by Wolf-Dieter Syring²⁷ and some others, the framework emerged at least in two major steps, whereby the author of the second step was also responsible for the prose introductions to the speeches in the dialogue.²⁸ As regards water, the frame story is the most different part of the book: no passage renders terminology related to water. The reasons are twofold: firstly, the story is a pure didactic narrative concentrating only on action somewhere in the dry land, and secondly, it is not poetry. In the poetic parts of the book of Job, water and related phenomena are more or less metaphorically used, significantly participating in the only adequate way of addressing existential or divine issues. In contrast to the prose frame story, poetry pretends not only to thematize human existence, but to be part of it.

3. The Chiasm of Water Imagery in the Original Dialogue

In the original Dialogue of Job, in this masterpiece of world literature, water in all its forms is part of an overall literary and rhetorical dialectic. Despite the popular opinion that there is no development in the dialogue between Job and his three consolers, all the parties still answer each other's speeches, questions and reproofs; the use of many Hebrew words in this interplay is programmatic and chiasmic indeed. Thereby, water certainly belongs to the most popular phenomena.

The word מַיִם appears already in the initial lament of Job, ch. 3. According to the deeply existential overtone of the lamentation, מַיִם is metaphorically utilized in the sense of an extreme, existential cry, 3:24–25:²⁹

- 24 Truly, my sighing comes before my bread,
and my groaning is poured out like water (מַיִם);
25 truly, the fear I feared has befallen me,
and what I dread comes upon me.

Like the entire initial lament, the given passage can be, too, called a key text for comprehending the dialogue and the position of Job in particular. Job understands himself being in a situation without any solution; suffering has become extreme. On the other hand, his friends try to

27 Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt*.

28 Cf. the Babylonian Theodicy where speeches are not introduced.

29 Translations offered here are those of the author of the current article but in finding suitable English formulations all the English commentaries mentioned in note 16 have provided considerable help.

comfort him, and declare the best fate if he only would put away iniquity and wickedness presupposed by them. In his first speech, Zophar answers and promises to Job (11:15–16):

- 15 Truly then you will lift up your face without blemish;
you will be secure, and will not fear;
- 16 truly *now*³⁰ you will forget misery,
you will remember it as waters (מים), passed away.

Zophar reverses Job's metaphor with water: against his groaning that is poured out like a flood of water, Zophar points at water of misery that will pass away. The third friend appears to be the one who addresses Job remarkably directly. His accusations are as immediate as his promises.³¹ His partner Bildad uses deeper and more dreadful pictures in addressing Job but is more systematic as well. In the centre of his argumentation lies the teaching of the fathers, and this is cited briefly in his first speech, 8:11, complemented by two explanations in verses 12–13:

- 11 Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh (בְּצִדָּה);
can reed flourish where there is no water (מַיִם)?
- 12 While still with its bud, not cut down,
it withers before any other plant.
- 13 Such are the paths of all who forget God,
and the hope of the impious shall perish.

Bildad applies a classic vegetation metaphor widely known in the Hebrew Bible and in the ancient Near East, since all the human life depends on water, like vegetation depends directly on the amount of accessible water. The phenomenon of drying out belongs to fundamental human experiences, particularly in the Middle East: a flourishing plant stays without water, dries out, and perishes, equally a human, here, a wicked human being. The existential play with water in the heart of Bildad's admonitions can hardly be overestimated. Job, on his part, addresses Bildad's vegetation imagery in his fourth speech but changes its point drastically. He exploits the image of the tree that will not die even if it is cut down, and contrasts it with the fate of mortals who cannot rise again after lying down. One of the key passages in the whole original layer of the dialogue, 14:7–12*, reads as follows:

30 Changed from צִדָּה to מַיִם; so the majority of commentators.

31 The slightly variable form and character of the speeches of the three friends has been focused at by Nömmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*.

- 7 Truly, there is hope for a tree,
 though it is cut down, it will sprout again, <...>³²
 8 though its root grows old in the earth,
 and its stump dies in the dust,
 9 at the scent of water (מַיִם) it will sprout,
 and put forth branches like a young plant.
 10 But man dies, and is laid low,
 and humans expire – where are they?
 11 Waters (מַיִם) fail from a sea (יָם),
 and a river (נָהָר) wastes away and dries up –
 12 <...>³³ until there are no heavens,³⁴ they will not awake,
 or be roused out of their sleep.

The positive imagery of a tree stump that buds only at the scent of water functions as a contrast to the hope of mortals thus drastically underplayed. The sub-strophe in verses 11–12*, if interpreted adequately, picks up and underlines the effect of water: a wadi and even a sea, here compared to mortals, are “dead” without water. The poet of these lines probably laid claim to the imagery of powerful ocean and vivid torrent in the wadi that awake as soon as the water is there; the elliptic metaphor aims at the hopeless end of a human being compared to the nature phenomena depending on water.

Eliphaz, the oldest friend of Job creatively takes over the keyword ‘water’ in his last speech, ch. 22, that originally most likely constituted the end of the dialogue between Job and his friends. Eliphaz has started his speeches very sensitively towards the situation of Job – as a matter of fact, chs. 4 and 5 in their original form (4:2–11; 5:1–2, 6–8, 18–21, 23–27) should belong to every study book of pastoral counseling.³⁵ The same can be observed by the second half of Eliphaz’s last speech, ch. 22. Only its first half exhibits everyone’s potential of loosing temper if confronted to extreme suffering. First, in 22:6–7, Eliphaz delivers a direct accusation of Job:

32 The last colon in v. 7, deleted here, is most likely a gloss; cf. Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 235, 239; Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 28.

33 Vv. 11–12 are difficult if asking about their original shape and meaning; despite the fact that the second colon is often deleted (cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 29), and the number in the verbs conjugated (cf. Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 235, 239), we will argue for the second and third cola to be the older ones – they relate not to the mortal in vv. 10 and 12a but to sea and river in v. 11, this is why plural of the verbs.

34 The word בְּלֵי should be emended into בְּלֵי; cf. E. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (trans. Harold Knight; London: Thomas Nelson, 1967), 201; Gray, *The Book of Job*, 229.

35 See Nõmmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, esp. 271–74.

- 6 For you have taken a pledge from your brother for no reason,
and stripped the naked of their clothing;
7 you have given no water (מַיִם) to the weary to drink,
and you have withheld bread from the hungry.

According to Eliphaz, social misdeeds of exactly the given rank have provoked violent retribution on Job, thus his situation is adequate. A need for water belongs to human essentials—giving nothing to drink fails to accept the social dependence, in fact, of the denier himself, and must lead to his social abandonment. In 22:10–11, 15–16, Eliphaz threatens Job, applying mythological and universal metaphors of destruction:

- 10 Therefore snares are around you,
and sudden terror overwhelms you,
11 *light is darkened*,³⁶ you cannot see,
and a flood of water (שֶׁפֶעַת־מַיִם) covers you.
15 Will you keep to the ever known way,
*a path*³⁷ that the wicked men trod,
16 who were snatched away before their time,
their foundation washed away by a river (נָהָר).

The destruction is universal since the mentioned flood attacks the very foundation and being of the wicked people. God takes barriers away and lets the chaos water come to the earth, to the very place of the godless. Snares, instruments of several ancient Near Eastern gods, like Ninurta or Shamash, and darkening light, the hostile will of the sun-god,³⁸ have been adapted by the author of Job to underline the ultimate and inescapable catastrophe of the wicked.

But a true poetic firework of water phenomena will be displayed in the absolute highpoint of the original dialogue, in the speech of God from the storm wind, chs. 38–39. The first chapter especially strikes the eye since several sub-units deal with water phenomena, of course everything for the sake of lauding God's marvelous deeds. A florilegium of passages (38:8–9, 16–17, 22, 24–26, 29–30, 33–34) more or less dealing with water from this wonderful hymn reads as follows:

36 Text has been changed from אור־הַשֶּׁחַר to אור־הַשֶּׁחַר (BHS, etc.).

37 The pronoun אֲשֶׁר is changed to אֲשֶׁר; see Nömmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, 50.

38 On snares and darkness see, e.g., the Shamash Hymn, lines 74–97, 180 (W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960], 131, 133, 137), or in a treaty of Esarhaddon ND 4336 (Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* [SAA 2; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988], 45).

- 8 *Who shut*³⁹ the sea (יָם) with doors,
 when it burst out, gushing from the womb,
 9 when I made clouds its garment,
 and thick darkness its swaddling band?⁴⁰
 16 Have you journeyed to the source of the sea (נַחְלֵי־יָם),
 or walked in the recesses of the deep (תְּהוֹמוֹת)?
 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you,
 or have you seen the gates of death's darkness?
 22 Have you journeyed to the storehouses of snow (שָׁלֵג),
 or have you seen the storehouses of hail (בָּרָד)?⁴¹
 24 Where is the way to the place where the light is distributed,
 or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?
 25 Who has cut a channel for the flood (שָׁפָךְ),
 and a way for the thunderbolt,
 26 to rain (מָטָר hif.) on the land where no one lives,
 on the desert, which is empty of humans?⁴²
 29 From whose womb did the ice (קָרוֹחַ) come forth,
 and the hoar-frost (כֶּפֶר) of heaven – who has given it birth,
 30 when water (מַיִם) is hidden [in]⁴³ stone,
 and the face of the deep (תְּהוֹמוֹת) is frozen?
 33 Do you know the ordinances of heaven,
 or can you establish their rule on earth?
 34 Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
 so that a flood of waters (שִׁפְעַת־מַיִם) may cover you?

Water and water phenomena thus belong to the mysteries of God. He, the almighty, has created the world but especially weather and water phenomena. In contrast, everything related to the sky and clouds and their emissions explicitly stays out of the reach of humans. Weather phenomena in this poetic context serve to draw a clear line between God and humans. Furthermore, God is not only a weather god, God is capable of stretching even to the sources of the sea and the deepest point of the תְּהוֹמוֹת, and that means God stands above all possible powers

39 In MT, וַיִּסָּךְ is certainly a mistake, correct should be a question (מִי סָךְ), like everywhere else in this text and in Vulgate; see, e.g., Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 491; Gray, *The Book of Job*, 457.

40 'Clouds' עָנָן and 'thick darkness' עָרְפֶּל here are not directly related to water but serve as decorative elements of the fixed boundaries for the chaos water.

41 A later redactor has probably inserted one bicolon 23; thus, vv. 22 and 24 were originally read as a pair of bicola in one sub-strophe; cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 70.

42 A later scribe has added vv. 27–28, containing even a hapax expression אֶגְלִי־טָל 'drops of dew'; cf. esp. Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 70; but also Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Hiob* (KHCAT 16; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1897), 186, Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 488, 492, and Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 192, hold v. 28 to be a gloss.

43 Preposition כִּי has been added to make the passage comprehensible.

in the universe; nothing comparable to God exists in the world. Job like his friends belongs to this world; and neither Job nor his friends reach God with their speech. They are capable of poetry and wisdom and existential as well as learned discussion but they do not come close to their creator. Job having lamented his fate and the distance to God must admit at the end that God is there and appears to humans despite their laments and discussions. Job is silenced; he does not say anything, and noteworthy is that he, indeed, most likely did not say anything in the original dialogue: after chs. 38–39* there was silence.⁴⁴

4. God Sets Limits to Water – God’s Majesty

The wide spectrum of water imagery of the first layer of the poem participates in its profoundness of thought. The latter has inspired numerous additions and extrapolations. One of the earliest secondary layers—the majesty (fear-of-God) redaction—follows the hymnic path of wisdom poetry and creatively proliferates the text of the book of Job (esp. 12:7–13:2; 26; 28*; 39:13–18).⁴⁵ The layer is easily distinguishable; the author concentrated on the majesty and might of God. Hence, water belongs to the sphere solely dominated by God. But as in 12:14–15, the divine might is aimed at setting limits to the water:

- 14 If he tears down, no one can rebuild;
he shuts someone in, no one can open up;
- 15 if he withholds the waters (מַיִם) they dry up;
if he sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.

Water imagery here paves the way for its use in the core texts of chs. 26 and 28*. Characteristically, it is not the creative and life-giving intent of

44 This absence of Job’s answer of any kind in the earliest version of the poem is advocated by Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 175–79, 191–92, Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt*, 147–48, 165–67, van Oorschot, “Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches,” 182–84, Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 73, 77, 116, and Nömmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, 284.

45 Passages according to Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 191, and van Oorschot, “Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches,” 176–79. Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt*, 168, and Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 125, add 9:(2)3–14 to the list of longer extrapolations. Van Oorschot (ibid.) maintains the fear-of-God redactor to be the key author to bind the poem and frame story together, involving thus also extrapolations in the frame story, and esp. in 42:7–9 (cf. Syring). It has to be noted, however, that already Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 205, 244–45, 383, 392–93, has considered 9:5–10; 12:7–25; 26:5–14, and ch. 28 as later additions, and cf. also Vermeylen, *Job, ses amis et son Dieu*, 66–67 (regarding 9:5–13, 25–31; 12:11–25; 26:5–27:1; 28).

God that is described, but the blocking of life-giving water and sending out the destruction. If one takes a step further, one might observe how water and water phenomena are mostly handled very carefully in the additions of this redactor. Water is good only in moderation, since its destructive power can reveal itself once it is not limited by God. The stress lays on consequences we as human beings together with all the creation have to draw: luckily there is someone who can cope with the destructive power of water and give it in portions when we need. Thereby, it goes without saying that everywhere in this layer the idea of creation is bound into conceptual framework, so in 28:25–26, God measures (cf. מִדָּ) the water to let it rain unto the earth:

- 25 When he gave the weight to the wind,
 and meted out the waters (מִדָּ) by measure;
 26 when he made a decree for the rain (מִדָּ),
 and a way to the thunderbolt.

Besides ch. 28, the other famous addition of the majesty redactor is ch. 26. It deals almost entirely with creation and water, but with clear mythological undertone, another characteristic feature of this redaction. Verses 5–14* read as follows:

- 5 The shades of the dead/ Rephaim writhe
 beneath the waters (מִדָּ) and their inhabitants;
 6 Sheol is naked before him,
 and no covering for Abaddon.
 7 He it is who stretches out Zaphon over the void,
 who suspends the earth over nothing,
 8 who wraps the water (מִדָּ) in his clouds (בָּרָא),
 yet the clouds (נֶפֶשׁ) are not burst under their weight;
 9 who covers the face of the throne,
 spreading his cloud (נֶפֶשׁ) over it.
 10 He traces a circle on the face of the waters (מִדָּ)
 at the boundary of light and darkness;
 11 the pillars of heaven tremble,
 and are astounded at his rebuke.
 12 By his power he stilled the sea / Yam (יָם),
 and by his insight he struck down Rahab;
 13 with the wind of heaven he broke him in pieces,
 his hand pierced the primeval serpent.
 14 Lo, these are the outskirts of his ways⁴⁶;
 and how small a whisper we hear of him? <...>⁴⁷

46 The *Qere* of plural should be preferred here, cf. BHS.

Also here, water has to be limited: it is either wrapped into the clouds or the firm border of horizon (here הָרָג) determines its extent. That the divine might is responsible for the limits is in fact efficaciously articulated by the weighty notions Rephaim רִפְּאִים (v. 5), Sheol שְׁאוֹל and Abaddon אֲבַדּוֹן (v. 6), the netherworld together with its mighty inhabitants that lies beneath the ocean and still is subjected to God. The imagery is once more escalated through Yam (the sea-god and the sea יָם), Rahab רָהַב (v. 12) and the primeval serpent נָחָשׁ בְּרִיָּה (v. 13) triumphed over by God. Imagery reminiscent of the battle between Marduk and Tiamat and creation of heaven and earth from the corpse of the latter in the Babylonian epic Enuma Elish (tablet IV) as well as the echo of Ugaritic *nḥš brḥ* in the Baal cycle (tablet II; cf. also Isa. 27:1)⁴⁸ must force the reader or the listener to the acceptance of God victoriously dominating all possible powers of the universe; and this must suggest again that the world will stand as it is. God is responsible for assuring harmony, and only he is capable of it.

5. Detailed Physical Observations in Elihu's Speeches

Directly before God's first speech, the fourth friend Elihu steps forward. Chapters 32–37 are a unit of their own, most broadly recognized as a secondary part of the book. It contests the paradigm of two dialogues between Job and God and Job and three friends. The original dialogue between Job and his friends in chs. 4–22* has been framed by the dialogue between Job and God in chs. 3*, 23*+27* and 38–39*. Of course, Job addresses God throughout the dialogue with his friends but it strikes the eye that only chs. 3 and 38–39 are directed to only one opposite party. Elihu's speeches clearly disturb this scheme; they represent five successive monologues without giving Job or his friends a chance to answer. Even if the author of Elihu's speeches lets him fiercely protest against Job and the three friends, he does not change the basic presupposition of correlation between one's behavior and fate.

47 The balanced structure of the hymn suggests that the third colon is a gloss, cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 48.

48 See Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* (MorS 2; New York City: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 280–81; the imagery of the serpent and its defeat might have certain astronomical background, as suggested by A. de Wilde, *Das Buch Hiob* (OTS 22; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 250–52.

But he adds a new perspective: the pedagogical aspect of divine punishment.⁴⁹

Elihu's author wants to demonstratively take advantage of the position in the book, remarkably directly on the doorstep of God's appearance. Elihu is even entitled to adapt and paraphrase the hymn of chs. 38–39 in advance. Thus in 37:9–10, inspired by God's speech and probably also by the hymns of the majesty redaction, water phenomena become signs of God's marvelous deeds:

- 9 From the chamber comes the whirlwind,
and from the storehouses the cold;
10 by the breath of God ice (קָרָד) is given,
and the wide water (יָם) is made solid.

Similar passages have an aftertaste of Elihu knowing everything better than anyone else, even God. And it has to be admitted that the author of Elihu has written the speeches almost as masterfully as the author of the dialogue. Regarding water phenomena, two passages attract the eye because of the accumulation of relevant and poetically pretentious terminology, 36:27–28 and 37:6:

- 36:27 For he draws up drops (נָטַף) from the sea (יָם),⁵⁰
distils them as rain (מָטָר) for the abyss (אֲדָמָה),
28 with which the clouds (עָנָן) pour (נָזַל),
they shower (רָעַף) upon all the humans.
37:6 Truly, to the snow (שֶׁלֶג) he says: "Fall on the earth";
and [to]⁵¹ the shower of rain (מָטָר רָעַף) <...>⁵²: "Flow down."⁵³

The imagery attests far-reaching reflections on weather phenomena by ancient scribes. These outstanding observations on the circulation of moisture cast into poetic language belong to the most detailed weather descriptions in the Hebrew Bible. Similarly to the appeal for theological precision, the author of Elihu's speeches aims at accuracy in imagery. Here, it is not only the might of God that is being demonstrated but the knowledge of different physical states of water and its circulation. It

49 On theology as well as later additions in Elihu's speeches see Wahl, *Der gerechte Schöpfer*, and recently Tanja Pilger, *Erziehung im Leiden. Komposition und Theologie der Elihureden in Hiob 32–37* (FAT 2/49; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

50 Text emended from יָם to יָם; Gray, *The Book of Job*, 436.

51 Preposition ל is added to parallel the colon to the first one; David J.A. Clines, *Job 21–37* (WBC 18A; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 838.

52 The words מְשָׁרֵת מְשָׁרֵת have to be taken away as duplicate; Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 562; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 838; Gray, *The Book of Job*, 437.

53 The noun has to be changed into verbal imperative; Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 562; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 838; Gray, *The Book of Job*, 437.

can only be possible if the author has had a good education, i.e., access to the carefully gathered (international) knowledge of the ancestors.

6. Job's Innocence is like the Latter Rain

Some literary and formal aspects indicate that the famous grand finale of Job's speeches in chs. 29–31, his oath of purgation and challenge to God, did not belong to the original dialogue. Almost all of it has been noted as addition by Syring and named as the innocence extrapolation by Kaiser.⁵⁴ It reveals already in the early phase of the literary growth of the book of Job that its redaction history was characterized by an overall tendency to successively legitimate Job and disqualify his friends.⁵⁵ This is the case even though at the beginning the speeches of Job have followed the ancient Near Eastern tradition of lamenting (a role-play to overcome suffering) and the admonitions of Job's friends represent the most traditional wisdom theology of those days. Chapters 29–31 underline Job's purity and exemplary piousness, in slight contrast to Job's hints in his speeches of the original layer to the iniquities of his youth, which cannot really be used as reproaches for a punishment of the given rank (13:26). It is true that in many ways, Job's "final speech" can be read as a reaction to Elihu's speeches intending to reestablish his dignity and purity and simultaneously preparing ground for the righteous redactions.

According to many parts of this added speech, especially in 29:22–23 that probably directly follows 29:12–16,⁵⁶ Job is the standard for others, and his sayings are like the words of some extraordinary wise person comparable with the greatest in the patriarchal times where the authors of the book have placed Job's drama:

- 22 After my words they did not speak,
 and upon them my speech dropped (נָטַף);
 23 and they waited for me as for rain (כְּמָטָר),
 and they opened their mouth as for latter rain (כְּמַלְקִיּוֹשׁ).

54 Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt*, 139–142; Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 115. Vermeylen (*Job, ses amis et son Dieu*, 67) extracts 29:11–20; 31:38–40a.

55 Cf. Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 227–28, and Nömmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, 9–10, 299–301, but cf. already Hans-Peter Müller, *Hiob und seine Freunde. Traditionsgeschichtliches zum Verständnis des Hiobbuches* (ThSt 103; Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), and Vermeylen, *Job, ses amis et son Dieu*.

56 Vv. 17–20 are likely an addition (redaction of righteousness), see further below.

Job's outstanding speech is compared with rain, and here lays the true hyperbole of Job's innocence: he can be compared to a king, like in Prov 16:15, but in the context of the book, Job becomes almost a life-giving god, since only the divine creation of life can help itself with rain. The latter rain מלקיִשׁ was particularly known as a guarantee of the ripening of fruits (cf. Zech 10:1).⁵⁷ Job's words are thus existential for the listeners, and at the same time an utmost honor for a mortal like Job.

7. Vitality of the Righteous, Depicted Through Water Imagery

The righteousness redaction has a clear agenda and affects both Job and his friends (esp. 5:9–17; 24:13–25; 27:13–23).⁵⁸ Already in the first speech of Eliphaz, a whole section 5:9–17 has been added. Verses 9–11 read as follows:

- 9 He does great things beyond searching,
 marvelous things beyond counting;
- 10 he gives rain (מטר) upon the earth
 and sends waters (מים) upon the fields;
- 11 to set on high those who are lowly,
 and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

The hymn is related to the poor and needy (cf. לַל and אֶבְיֹן in verses 15–16): God is almighty, and this is the best guarantee for the pious ones to be saved by him. Similar direct relationship between God the creator and God the savior does not appear in other layers of the book of Job. It is remarkable how in this passage, the *creatio continua* is expressed very briefly in terms of setting rain on the fields. Probably also in ch. 29, verses 17–20 have been added by the redactor of the righteousness.⁵⁹ In verses 19–20, water becomes a metaphor for Job's prosperous life:

- 19 My root spreads out to the water (מים),
 and the dew (טל) rests all night on my branches,
- 20 my dignity is fresh within me,
 and my bow renewed in my hand.

57 See Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 421.

58 Depending on the scholar, further texts like 12:4–6; 24:5–8; 27:7–10; 30:1b–8 and parts of ch. 31 have been added to this list; cf. Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 215–20, 192; van Oorschot, "Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches," 182–84; Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 117–18; Nõmmik, *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs*, 28–31.

59 Thus Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 53. Vermeulen, *Job, ses amis et son Dieu*, 67, considers 29:11–20 as an addition of the second edition.

The prosperous life can be lived only by someone being righteous, according to the will of the righteous God. The passage plays with well known and above mentioned pictures from Bildad's first speech, ch. 8, and Job's fourth speech, ch. 14. The new Job, the edited Job, cannot change anything about his fate that still has to be a real challenge to God, but he can principally agree with Bildad on the well supplied life of a righteous person.

The contrasting idea of punishing the wicked organically belongs to the righteousness redaction layer, and it is no surprise that the water imagery is used, 24:19:

- 19 The drought, also the heat snatch away *the water* (מַיִם)⁶⁰,
 (so does) *the torrent* (תַּלְוִי)⁶¹ of Sheol those who have sinned.

What happens in Sheol, of course, can only happen according to the will of God: the wicked are left alone in the midst of all the hostile powers of the universe, and the dark river of Sheol certainly ranks among the very those (cf. Ezek 31:15).

8. Humans Washed Away – Transience Extrapolations

In the meanwhile, beside all the positive reactions to the ambivalence of water imagery in the original layer of the poem, a further notable series of extrapolations occurs, but this time with clearly negative connotation. The author of those lines was concerned about the transience of human life and suffering in line with several pessimistic Psalms (39; 49; 73; 90), but it cannot be exactly localized in the redaction history of the book of Job. The addition is intended to combine the register of the darkest speeches of Job from the original dialogue with the idea of transience; the outcome of the synthesis is a severe reproof to God. In Job 7 (perhaps throughout verses 1–18) perhaps the most impressive part of this addition occurs;⁶² verses 9–12 read as follows:

60 The expression מַיִם יְשֻׁלִּים 'snow-waters' at the end of the first colon is very likely corrupt, however, according to Witte (*Philologische Notizen zu Hiob* 21–27, 107–8) it can be emended into מַיִם at the end of the first colon and into תַּלְוִי 'torrent' at the beginning of the second colon.

61 See previous note.

62 Cf. Vermeylen, *Job, ses amis et son Dieu*, 66, holds 7:1–21 for a text from the hand of the "second editor" of the book.

- 9 It (my life) fades [like]⁶³ a cloud (נֶפֶשׁ), and vanishes,
so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up;
10 he returns no more to his house,
nor does his place know him any more.
11 As for me, I will not restrain my mouth,
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul:
12 am I Yam (יָם) or Tannin (תַּנִּינִי),
that you set a guard over me?

The author, even leaving to later generations his “signature” (יָם־תַּנִּינִי in verse 11) asks a drastic rhetoric question that is at its best comprehensible bearing the hymn of the majesty redaction in ch. 26 in mind. The reproach to God is clear: no human should be compared with the mythic sea monster; no human can impersonate chaos water. Some speeches later, in 14:18–19,⁶⁴ water becomes a true negative image about the perdition of mortals. The metaphor of water and torrent washing away soil and stones helps Job to accentuate his reproof against God who destroys the hope of mortals without any reason:

- 18 Yet as a mountain *surely falls*,⁶⁵
and a rock is removed from its place,
19 as water (מַיִם) wears away the stones;
a torrent (מַבְרָר)⁶⁶ washes away the dust of the earth;
so you make the hope of man perish.⁶⁷

9. Drinking Wrong Like Water – the Lowliness Redaction

With good grounds, it is possible to presuppose a relatively late date of the next redaction layer. It implies an experience of a significantly grown distance between the creator and his creation. The problem of mortality and suffering must have been also discussed already for a while. The complaint of the transience of life was a known phenomenon. The principal disability and failure of humans to measure up to

63 Here at least preposition ׀ once stood, if not the longer variant נֶפֶשׁ; cf. Clines, *Job* 1–20, 164.

64 According to Vermeylen, *Job, ses amis et son Dieu*, 66, 13:20–14:22 are product of the second editor.

65 Based on Septuagint and others, the text should be reconstructed: נֶפֶשׁ יָפִי; see BHS, and Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 204.

66 Plural and suffix at the end of this word are both probably a scribal error, since the verb is in singular; cf. BHS.

67 Cf. Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 29.

the divine requirements reflected later in the Qumran Hodayot and Community Rule as well as in the Pauline literature has become an issue. Characteristically, it is Eliphaz (4:12–21; 15:11–16) and Bildad (the so-called “third speech” ch. 25) who are supposed to show Job and the reader of the book that no one can be pure before God. Those maintaining this redaction layer ascribe also the answers of Job in 40:3–5 and 42:1–6* to it; hence, Job draws right consequences from friend’s speeches.⁶⁸ Thus, all of us are doing injustice and dependent on the will of God. Typically, water can be metaphorically used in such a context, 15:14–16:

- 14 What is man that he may be pure,
 one born of woman that he could be in the right?
- 15 Lo, even his holy ones he does not trust,
 and the heavens are not pure in his eyes,
- 16 how then one abhorrent and corrupt,
 a man who drinks wrong like water (מים)?

10. Conclusions

This brief overview has discussed the use of imagery concerning water and water phenomena in the book of Job. Even though not all cases have been discussed (cf. late additions in 40:20–24 (Behemot) and 41:22–26 (Leviathan)), a specific, redaction critical view helped to envisage the dialectic of water imagery through the history of the Hebrew Joban literature. Imagery related to water and water phenomena can be ranked among the most significant poetic tools of the authors of the book. Apart from the prose frame story, water is present in all major layers of the book. Water is especially suitable for dealing with existential matters because without it no life is possible, but with too much of it, life can perish. In reasonable amounts, water is good, and God is ascribed the responsibility in this matter. In large amounts, water is dark, chaotic, and destructive, and must be limited by God. On the other hand, God is the only one who is capable of dominating chaos and all the water of the universe. The universal imagery is accompanied by the metaphors of water flowing into or out of humans’ mouth. It can symbolize wrong that is drunk by humans, it can be groaning

68 See Witte, *Vom Leiden zur Lehre*, 175–79, 191–92 (the answers are once more extrapolated later); van Oorschot, “Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches,” 182–84, and cf. Syring, *Hiob und sein Anwalt*, 165–67, and Kaiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 73, 77, 127. Vermeylen, *Job, ses amis et son Dieu*, 72, ascribes 40:1–2 and 42:1–6 to the final editor of the book.

poured out of the mouth of the sufferer, and it can be words of the righteous person that bring pleasant rain on the people.

From these basic ideas, all the imagery of the book of Job derives; only the images can be differently accentuated. These accents, indeed, make up the dialectic of the basic layer as well as the redaction history of the whole book.

Water in 1–2 Kings

JUHA PAKKALA

1. Introduction

The focus of this study is on water in the book of Kings, and it investigates references to water and closely related themes in this book. The study seeks to provide an overview of the ways in which the authors of Kings related to water and to explore whether there are themes in connection with water that recurrently emerge.

Although it is very probable that the references derive from different authors and editors, the approach taken is synchronic and does not seek to distinguish between different authors.¹ Accordingly, no attempt will be made to locate and date the exact context of the passages in question. The overview is more general in nature. Despite this limitation, interesting features emerge concerning the relationship to water in the book of Kings.

Because of its relative scarcity, water is a natural concern in most parts of the Middle East. Lack of rain or other sources of fresh water means death. In the Levant, fresh water is essentially dependent on regular winter rains that may occasionally be meager, causing economic difficulties. A complete lack of rain would bring about a disaster. The ancient mind interpreted such a lack as the displeasure of the divine, as is also reflected in many passages of the Hebrew Bible (see, e.g., Lev 26:18–20, Deut 28:23–24, 1 Kgs 18). Accordingly, rain was regarded as a blessing (e.g., Ps 68:10; 72:6) and in metaphorical language, for example, fresh water represented something good or something that should be pursued (e.g., Ps 23:2). Springs and wells were a source of wealth and thus control of them was essential (e.g., Num 20:17, 2 Kgs 19:24, Hos 13:15). On the other hand, the control of water was often considered to be a matter of the gods. Although some forms of water were assumed to be divine, water was regarded as a primeval and chaotic

1 It is evident that most, if not all, of the passages discussed in this paper contain editorial changes. See, for example, Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige. 1. Kön. 17–2. Kön. 25* (ATD 11/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984).

element, which could only be controlled by powerful gods. This also reveals the ambivalent nature of water.² On the one hand, it was regarded as something chaotic and perhaps threatening, but on the other, it was regarded as a blessing without which everything would die. These conceptions derive from the climatic conditions of the Levant, and are also reflected in many forms in the Hebrew Bible.

The picture of water that emerges from the book of Kings is somewhat unexpected. There is a heavy concentration on water in some passages, while in the rest of the composition water plays only a marginal role. Of the myriad of possible uses of water, some stand out as particularly common in the book. Contrary to what one would expect, the relative scarcity and the high dependency on water in the Levant, as discussed above, do not stand out as prominent motifs in the references to water in this book. On the other hand, control of water appears as a leading motif that is shared by many of the passages. Some unexpected connections emerge as well.

2. Water, Prophets, and Miracles

Of the 22 passages in Kings that refer to water, 18 are found in passages that are connected to prophets³ or where a prophet plays a central role.⁴ One could suggest that this close link is the result of the fact that the Elijah-Elisha cycle in 1 Kgs 17–2 Kgs 8 deals with the problem of drought. However, the drought is a theme only in 1 Kgs 17–18, and most of the references to water in these chapters are not directly connected to the drought. In the actual drought scene in 1 Kgs 18, water is most often mentioned in connection to the pouring of the water on the altar in order to prepare for the miracle (vv. 34, 35, and 38). Furthermore, the connection between water and prophets continues in the other passages of the Elijah-Elisha cycle as well (in 2 Kgs 2–8), as in the rest of Kings (Micah: 1 Kgs 22:27; 100 prophets of Yahweh: 1 Kgs 18:4,

2 See also Wiel Dierx and Günther Garbrecht, *Wasser im Heiligen Land. Biblische Zeugnisse und archäologische Forschungen* (Frontius-Gesellschaft e.V.; Mainz: Verlag Philip von Zabern, 2001), 20.

3 In some cases, the activity of the prophet could be characterized as that of a miracle man. This is particularly the case with Elisha, and also to some extent with Elijah, although both are called prophets (e.g., Elijah in 1 Kgs 18:22 and Elisha in 2 Kgs 3:11).

4 The link between water and prophets is further highlighted if we look at the mere occurrences of the word water, מים: of the 43 occurrences in Kings, only four are found in passages where a prophet plays no role.

13; and the old prophet: 1 Kgs 13:8–22). These passages are not connected to the drought theme. It is thus fair to conclude that there is a particular connection between prophets and water in Kings that is not merely a coincidence. This is emphasized by the high probability that these texts were likely written by various authors at different times, and in different contexts. Although it is difficult to explain what the exact reason for this link is, some possibilities emerge.

An examination of the passages where prophets are linked with water quickly reveals that water is often associated with miracles. Of the 18 passages that connect prophets with water, ten are also associated with miracles.⁵ In some cases there is a further connection with magic. Water may be the immediate instrument of a miracle, or it may be closely associated with a setting where a prophet performs a miracle.⁶

The function of water in the drought scene is to demonstrate the power of Yahweh over the laws of nature. Elijah poured water on the altar and the burnt offering three times so that they were fully soaked. This was done in order to demonstrate that the altar could not be set on fire by natural means (see, 1 Kgs 18:34, 35, 38). Yahweh's fire not only consumed the offerings and the altar stones but also licked up (לָחַק) the water. The miracle demonstrated that Yahweh was the only God because he was able to overrule natural laws.⁷ Thereby the authors sought to make the difference between Yahweh and Baal explicitly clear. The prophets of the latter divinity were unsuccessful in their attempt to evoke rain (1 Kgs 18:39), whereas Yahweh was not only able to make rain, but also to contravene the rules of nature. Along with fire, water

5 Miracles are regularly connected to prophets in the Hebrew Bible. In addition to Elijah and Elisha, one should mention Moses in particular.

6 Some scholars, such as Yair Zakovitch, "Miracle (Old Testament)," *ABD* 4:845–56, here p. 850, define miracles as being ultimately occasioned by God only, while considering magic to be a human act that uses special techniques to force nature. On the other hand, the passages discussed here show that in many cases the prophets use magical rites to perform what should be characterized as a miracle.

7 Clearly, the ancients did not think in categories of natural laws and nature. The main idea of miracles was that their performer was able to do something that others could not, and something that could not possibly happen without some special powers. Harold E. Remus, "Miracle (New Testament)," *ABD* 4:856–69, here p. 856, defines miracles as follows: "That which causes wonder—the extraordinary—is one essential element in miracle. The other is that the extraordinary phenomenon is inexplicable in terms of familiar, everyday causation and so is ascribed to a superhuman force or agency." Cf. Zakovitch, "Miracle," 846, compares miracles to the act of creation. Magic often involves the use of a specific item or a rite (specific course of action, spell, formulaic recitation, incantation, etc.) to perform the miracle. See Jo Ann Scurlock "Magic (Ancient Near East)," *ABD* 4:464–67, here p. 464.

was thus used as one of the basic elements that Yahweh was able to control.

There are several other cases in which water is similarly a medium or an object of a miracle. Many of these are found in the miracle stories presented in 2 Kgs 2–3. With 18 references, these chapters also provide the heaviest concentration of references to water in the book, and perhaps one of the heaviest concentrations in the entire Hebrew Bible.

The first miracle in 2 Kgs 2–3 is the parting of the water of the river Jordan with a mantle so that one could walk across. The miracle is first performed by Elijah in 2 Kgs 2:8, but after he is taken away to heaven in a whirlwind, his disciple Elisha repeats the same miracle in v. 14. Both prophets demonstrate that Yahweh has given them the power to perform these miracles. With Yahweh's backing, the prophets would be able to conquer even the most powerful elements. One should also note the magical aspect apparent in the account, for Elijah uses a special item, the mantle (אֵדָרָה), to perform the miracle. He hits the water with the mantle in order to part it (v. 8). This is highlighted by the fact that, after Elijah has been taken to heaven, Elisha picks up the mantle and similarly hits the water to repeat the miracle (v. 14).⁸ It appears to be a magical mantle by way of which Elijah's powers are transferred to Elisha.⁹ It is certainly no accident that the mantle was already mentioned in 1 Kgs 19:13 and 19. The magical aspect of the mantle becomes evident in 1 Kgs 19:19 during the calling of Elisha to become Elijah's disciple. The throwing of the mantle over Elisha causes him to follow Elijah immediately. As noted by Würthwein, "the mantle is filled with the power of its bearer."¹⁰ One should also note that Elisha did not perform any miracles before he received the mantle; the text implies that the miracles are dependent, at least in part, on Elisha carrying the mantle.¹¹ It is apparent that the mantle is used as a magical instrument to perform miracles. On the other hand, the text does imply that Yahweh is ultimately behind the miracle. The mantle is thus a magical device used to channel the power of a divinity.¹²

8 The reason for the repetition of the miracle may be to highlight that Elijah's power had now been transferred to Elisha and that the latter has now taken his place.

9 Thus also, for example, Immanuel Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Könige* (Freiburg, Leipzig and Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1899), 131.

10 Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 233.

11 See also Benzinger, *Bücher der Könige*, 131.

12 Note that in 2 Kgs 4:29–31 Elisha appears to be in possession of another magical item, a staff. By giving the staff to his disciple, Gehazi, the latter is able to perform miracles like his teacher (cf. the transfer of power from Elijah to Elisha).

There is an apparent connection between the parting of the Jordan in 2 Kgs 2 and two other similar miracles in the Hebrew Bible: the parting of the sea by Moses in Exod 14:21–22 and the parting of the Jordan by Joshua in Josh 3:5–17. In addition to the idea of parting a natural water barrier in order to cross the water, a magical item is used in all three passages to perform the miracle. In Josh 3:5–17 the ark functions as such an item; the water stays out as long as the ark is located on the bottom of the riverbed (vv. 13, 17). The ark thus channels Yahweh's power to hold back the elements.¹³ In Exod 14 the staff in Moses' hand functions as the magical item (v. 16). The staff being implicitly in Moses' hand, the sea obeys whenever Moses moves his hand (see vv. 21 and 26–28).¹⁴ Although this passage also implies that Yahweh is ultimately behind the miracle, his power is channeled through the item in the hand of a man of God. A further parallel between the passages is the idea of transferring power from one prophet to another. As Joshua imitates Moses in parting the water barrier, Elisha imitates Elijah. The wonder thus demonstrates that the disciples are true prophets.¹⁵

Although the parallels are evident, the connections between these three passages are not necessarily direct or literary.¹⁶ Second Kings 2 does not appear to use any of the specific terminology of Exod 14 or Josh 3, and therefore the similarities may have been caused by a shared literary topos. This is further suggested by the fact that the idea of parting waters is also found in Papyrus Westcar, an Egyptian document possibly composed during the Middle Kingdom.¹⁷ The papyrus contains several tales of miracles and magic performed by lector priests.¹⁸

13 There are also many other passages where the ark is used as a magical item to perform miracles (see, for example, 1 Sam 4:7–8; 5:1–5; 6:19–20; 2 Sam 6:1–10).

14 Although the staff is not mentioned in the actual parting of the sea, v. 16 implies that it was in his hand. The importance of the staff as a magical object and as a channeling device of the miracles is more apparent in the miracle stories in Exodus 7–10 (see, for example, Exod 7:9, 12; 8:1, 12).

15 Cf. Axel Knauf, *Joshua* (ZBK; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2009), 58–59, according to whom Joshua 3 seeks to show that Joshua is a true prophet. Similarly, Gwilym H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings, vol ii* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984), 386–87, on the motive of the re-enactment of the wonder in 2 Kings 2.

16 For a discussion about the similarities between the activity of Moses and Elijah/Elisha, see Robert P. Carroll, "The Elijah-Elisha Sagas: Some Remarks on Prophetic Succession in Ancient Israel," *VT* 19 (1969): 400–415.

17 Thus, Richard B. Parkinson, "Papyrus Westcar" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt vol. 3* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 24–25, here p. 24.

18 See also the discussion in Diana V. Edelman, "Of Priests and Prophets and Interpreting the Past: The Egyptian *HM-NTR* and *HRȝ-ḤBT* and the Judahite *NĀBI'*," in *The Historian and the Bible: Essays in Honour of Lester L. Grabbe* (ed. P. Davies and D. Edelman; LHBOTS 530; New York: T & T Clark International, 2010), 103–12.

One of the tales describes the recovery of a turquoise fish pendant from the water. After the pendant had accidentally fallen into the water, the chief lector priest Djadjamankh cast a magical spell that caused the waters to part, thus exposing the ground below as well as the pendant (see Papyrus Westcar 5:16–6:13). Another spell was needed to return the parted water to its original position (6:13). The idea of parting the waters is thus not an uncommon topic in the ancient Near East, so one does not necessarily need to assume a literary connection among the three such stories contained in the Hebrew Bible. There may also be an echo of the idea of parting waters in the priestly creation story, in which the water was divided in order for the heaven and the earth to appear (Gen 1:6–10). As in the miracle stories, Yahweh demonstrated his power over the elements by parting the waters. The background of the general idea of parting waters may also be the ancient Semitic sea combat myth where the storm god attacks the sea monster. For example, in the Babylonian myth *Enuma Eliš*, the storm god Marduk slays the sea monster Tiamat and splits her body in half. Her body is then used to create the heavens and the earth. In the Ugaritic Baal cycle Baal is able to slay the sea by using magical weapons (KTU 1.2 iv 11–32), which further links the myth with the stories discussed above.

Another miracle story connected to water is found in 2 Kgs 2:18–22. In this passage Elisha goes to Jericho, where the people complain that their water is bad, causing the land to be infertile.¹⁹ As a solution, Elisha performs a miracle by throwing salt into the spring (מִצְאָה הַמַּיִם) in what appears to be a magical rite or ritual, for Elisha first orders the placing of the salt in a new jar. The act is accompanied by the word of Yahweh that he has cured (רָפָא) the water (v. 21). The word of Yahweh has a function similar to a magical spell, causing the salt to purify the water, for Elisha utters the words when he throws the salt into the spring. Although salt is often used in rites of purification²⁰ or separation,²¹ in the current passage the miraculous or magical aspect of the act is evident, for salt often symbolizes barrenness in the Hebrew Bible (thus, for example, Deut 29:23, Job 39:6, Jer 17:6). In other words, the miracle is

19 Some scholars, such as Benzinger, *Bücher der Könige*, 132, assume that the phrase מִצְאָה הַמַּיִם refers to the childlessness or infertility of the people of the land. The verb שָׁלַח often refers to childlessness. This reading is supported by the Antiochene text, which omits the word for “land” and reads: καὶ τὰ ὕδατα πονηρὰ καὶ ἀτεκνούντα, “the water is bad and causes miscarriages.”

20 Thus, for example, John Gray, *I & II Kings* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 427–28, and Jürgen Werlitz, *Die Bücher der Könige* (NSKAT 8; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002), 208–9.

21 Jones, *Kings*, 389.

that exactly the opposite of what one would expect to happen, happens. After the rite was performed the water was purified and has been good ever since. Here water is the focus of attention, and the medium of performing the miracle. Unlike in some other passages, water is not the instrument of purification, but its object, with salt being the instrument.

Israel's campaign against Moab in 2 Kgs 3 provides a further miracle story in the Elijah-Elisha cycle. According to verse 9 the army does not have enough water after King Jehoram of Israel decided to take the desert route in order to flank the enemy. King Jehoshaphat of Judah therefore asks Elisha for advice, and he prophesizes that the campaign will be successful and that Yahweh will perform a miracle: although there will be no rain, the valley or the wadi will be filled with water (v. 17). The Israelites would have to dig holes for gathering the water. What Elisha predicted then took place (v. 20). This passage also contains a magical aspect, connected to the playing of a musical instrument.²² The power of Yahweh (יְהוָה) descends on Elisha to perform the miracle only after a musician has played his instrument (v. 15).²³ In this passage Yahweh is again presented as a divinity who is able to control the elements and whose power may be demonstrated in miracles and magic.

Another miracle concerning water is found in 2 Kgs 3:22. The Moabites had gathered to defend their land against Israel (v. 21), but in the morning they saw the water appear as if filled with blood. From this the Moabites incorrectly concluded that their opponents had started killing each other and they advanced on the assumption that the Israelite army was already defeated. This led to the destruction of the Moabite army, as they were caught by surprise by the still operational Israelite army. Although the passage does not mention Yahweh as the ultimate reason for the water looking like blood,²⁴ the miraculous aspect of the events is still apparent.²⁵ The passage contains a further reference to water, which, however, is unrelated to miracles. When the Israelites conquer Moab, they destroy all the springs of water (vv. 19, 25), the lifeline of Moab. That the Israelites also cut down the fruit trees

22 The text does not specify what the instrument was, but the verb נָנַח implies a stringed instrument.

23 According to Jones, *Kings*, 396, "Elisha's dependence on such a stimulant ... places Elisha firmly in the category of ecstatic prophets."

24 The reflecting sun is the implied cause for the water looking like blood; see 2 Kgs 3:22: וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ זָרַחָה עַל־הַמַּיִם וַיֵּרְאוּ מוֹאָב מִנֶּגֶד אֶת־הַמַּיִם אֲדָמִים כָּדָם.

25 Thus many, for example, Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 280.

shows that it was their intention to destroy the basis of Moabite subsistence.

The next reference to water in a miracle story appears in 2 Kgs 5:12, which is part of a passage describing the miraculous healing of the Aramean military captain Naaman from leprosy. Elisha asks Naaman to wash himself in the Jordan seven times so that he might be cured of the disease (v. 10). After an initial protest, asking why the waters of Damascus should be worse than those of the Jordan, Naaman is convinced by his servants to wash himself, which results in his miraculous healing (v. 14). The general concept in this passage is somewhat similar to the common idea in some priestly texts suggesting that water is part of a process to cure diseases (e.g., Lev 14:8–9, 52) or remove other impurities (e.g., Lev 15). On the other hand, the priestly texts emphasize the ritualistic and regulatory aspect of what is seen as purification, while the miraculous aspect of the healing is prominent in 2 Kgs 5:1–27.

Second Kings 6 contains further miracles performed by Elisha. The first passage of the chapter describes a scene where the novice prophets or students of Elisha ask to be allowed to build a larger room for the prophet school (vv. 1–7). As they were cutting trees for the new room by the River Jordan, a borrowed axe head accidentally fell into the water (v. 5). Subsequently, Elisha cut off a stick and threw it into the water, which led to the axe head, made of metal, to float to the surface (v. 6).²⁶ As in some of the other miracle stories, the prophet demonstrated his and Yahweh's power over natural forces. In the hand of Yahweh's prophet, even a wooden stick could be used as a magical item. The story also demonstrates Elisha's superior powers in relation to those of his disciples. One should further note the parallel between this story and the above-mentioned one in Papyrus Westcar 5:16–6:13, where a pendant fell into the water. In both cases, a miracle was needed to recover the item from the water, although the miracles were different. There is also a distant Greek parallel to the story in one of Aesop's fa-

26 Gray, *Kings*, 460, and Jones, *Kings*, 422, have misunderstood the point of the story by attempting to find a natural explanation for the event. For example, Gray writes: "The factual basis of the 'miracle' of the floating axe-head may be that Elisha with a long pole or stick probed about the spot indicated (an important point in the text) until he succeeded either in inserting the stick into the socket, or, having located the hard object in the muddy bottom ...". In the context of repeated other miracles, it is evident that the author sought to demonstrate the power of Elisha over natural elements such as water. This interpretation is corroborated by the use of the verb צָוַף, "to swim," "float," "overflow," which shows that the author intended to show that natural laws had been broken. Benzinger, *Bücher der Könige*, 140, similarly rejects all attempts to find a natural explanation for the events.

bles, that of the Honest Woodman. After a woodcutter accidentally dropped his axe into a river, the god Hermes took pity on him and recovered it.²⁷

Second Kings 6:22 is part of yet another miracle story, although water only plays a marginal role in the passage and is not connected to the miracle. The story describes how Elisha thwarts an Aramean attack by blinding the Aramean army unit operating against Israel. After it has been blinded, the unit does not know where it is going and somehow finds its way into the middle of the city of Samaria and into the hands of the Israelite army. Instead of destroying them, the unnamed king of Israel gives them bread to eat and water to drink, and lets them go home. As a consequence, the Arameans do not make any further raids into Israel.

First Kings 19:6 is part of the story in which Elijah flees from Jezebel. Escaping death at the hands of Jezebel, Elijah goes to the desert near Beersheba in order to die there. When Elijah goes to sleep, an angel appears to him and tells him to eat and drink. Hot cakes and a jar of water had miraculously appeared and were waiting for him. After eating and drinking, the angel again asks him to eat and drink in order for him to be able to make the trip through the desert (v. 5–7). After eating and drinking he is fit to continue, and on that meal he is able to travel for 40 days to Horeb. The miraculous and mythical character of the story is evident, and water functions as a partial instrument of the miracle.²⁸

3. Water in Other Passages Concerning Prophets

There are several passages in Kings where water appears in connection with prophets without any link to miracles. In most of these cases water does not play a central role but is mentioned casually or in a stereotypical way. The first example of the connection between references to water and prophets can be found in 1 Kgs 13.²⁹ This passage, which may

27 Hermes initially recovers a golden and a silver axe, asking whether he had lost them, but the honest woodcutter rightly rejects them as not his own. For his honesty the divinity grants him all three axes, including his own.

28 As noted by Werlitz, *Bücher der Könige*, 177, there is a clear parallel between this story and the story describing Moses' activities on Mount Sinai (cf. Exod 34:18; Deut 1:2, 6, 19; 40:10, 15). Both figures are presented as prophets and miracle men guided by Yahweh.

29 First Kings 13 finds no parallel in Chronicles. As is well known, 1 Kings 12–14 are very complicated from the perspective of textual criticism. Because the textual wit-

be a relatively late addition to the Jeroboam story, describes the coming of the man of God from Judah to Bethel to speak against the altar constructed by King Jeroboam. The man of God, who is also called a prophet in v. 18, predicts the altar's later destruction by King Josiah. Yahweh orders him not to eat or drink (water) in Bethel. However, when the man of God leaves the town, an old prophet asks his son to invite the man to his home to eat and drink. Ignoring Yahweh's explicit order, he accepts the invitation and drinks and eats (vv. 11–19). As a punishment, the man is killed by a lion (v. 24). The passage mentions water eight times, but only in rather idiomatic references to eating and drinking with the phrase:

“ to eat bread and drink water”
(1 Kgs 13:8, 9, 16–10, 22).

אכל לחם שתה מים

This seems to be a somewhat fixed sentence referring to the basic food-stuffs of the society.³⁰ The focus of the passage is not on water itself but on Yahweh's order to the man of God not to eat or drink. The text does not explain why he is not allowed to eat or drink in Bethel, but at least in part it seems to be a means to test him. One possibility would be to assume that the illegitimacy of the altar and the cult site had made the place unclean, but this is not explicitly said and may go beyond what the text intends.

First Kings 14:15 is part of another prophecy against King Jeroboam.³¹ In this passage, Jeroboam sends his wife to ask the prophet Ahija of Shiloh about his son who was ill. Instead of giving any hope of the son's recovery, the prophet tells her that the son will die when she returns to the city, which then happens. In v. 15 Ahia further prophesizes that “Yahweh will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water.” In this verse the word water is used in a figure of speech in which Israel is likened to something that is easily shaken. This does not seem to reveal very much about the background or the historical setting; it could orig-

nesses contain considerable differences in these chapters, it is probable that they continued to be edited quite late. The Chronicler may have made substantial changes, but it is perhaps more probable that he used a very different version of the account from what we now have in the Masoretic text or in the Septuagint. He would have been unfamiliar with the whole story of 1 Kings 13.

30 Similarly also in 1 Kgs 18:4, 13; 22:47. In comparison, in ancient Egypt bread and beer seem to have been the main staple foods that one refers to. In modern Finnish, for example, one would say, eat bread and drink milk. The same word pair, bread and water, is met in several of the other passages in 1–2 Kings and in other parts of the Hebrew Bible.

31 This passage is missing in Chronicles and is part of 1 Kings 12–14, which contain considerable text-critical problems. The Chronicler may have been familiar with a very different version of the whole passage.

inally derive from anywhere in the Near East where there are reeds. Perhaps it would not be an obvious metaphor in a hill country community like Judah, and would be more at home close to rivers and other types of fresh water, but such metaphors can spread easily to other regions as well.

Second Kings 3:11, part of the Elijah-Elisha cycle as well, provides a further case where water is mentioned in connection with prophets. In this verse Elisha is referred to as the one who poured water on Elijah's hands (אלישע בן־שפט אשר־יצק מים על־ידי אליהו). It probably refers to the washing of hands, which seems to be a metaphor for someone who is a servant of someone else.³² It clearly suggests a position of servitude in relation to someone important but it also implies honor, because one was, perhaps only symbolically, allowed to wash the hands of an important person. In the present text the phrase was used to legitimize Elisha's authority as a prophet. The same phrase does not appear in the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

Second Kings 8:7–15 describes the death of Ben Hadad, the king of Aram. The king had become ill and therefore sent Hazael to ask Elisha whether he would recover from the illness or not. According to the prophet, Ben Hadad would recover but would nonetheless die. Elisha additionally predicted that Hazael would become the next king of Aram, killing many Israelites. In what appears to be a murder, the passage concludes with Hazael dipping a bed cloth in water and spreading it on Ben Hadad's face so that he could not breathe (v. 15).³³ Subsequently Hazael ascends the throne of Aram.

32 As argued by many scholars. See, for example, Gray, *Kings*, 435, and Jones, *Kings*, 395. Cf. John 13:12–14, which implies that washing the feet of someone was a gesture of servitude but also of honor. See also Luke 7:37–50.

33 This interpretation of the event is followed by most commentators, for example James A. Montgomery and Henry Snyder Gehman, *The Book of Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1950), 391–93; Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 318–19; Jones, *Kings*, 445; Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 275, and Sweeney, *Kings*, 318–319. Nevertheless, the passage is not entirely clear as to whether a murder was originally meant. Another, although less probable, alternative would be to assume that the placing of the bed cloth on the face was part of a death ritual and that Hazael would not have murdered Ben Hadad. This interpretation is problematical because it would not explain Elisha's ambiguous prophecy in v. 10 that Ben Hadad would recover but would still die. Gray, *Kings*, 478–79, notes that murder is only one interpretation; he raises the possibility that Hazael merely came to refresh the linen with water in order to alleviate his illness. In this case, however, Elisha's prophecy would not have been fulfilled. It would thus be more logical that Ben Hadad had already recovered and that Hazael's act was indeed meant to be portrayed as a murder.

Apart from the water mentioned in connection to the miracle of the altar, there are other references to water in the drought narrative as well. When Elijah went to Zarephath, he saw a widow by the gate and asked her to give him water in a vessel to drink and bread to eat (1 Kgs 17:10). Although mentioned only once, water has an important role in this passage. The widow complains that she does not have much bread anymore and she is therefore preparing her last meal before she and her son will die. She has run out of food because of the drought. This passage functions as a prelude and introduction for the ensuing drought narrative in 1 Kgs 18. It also illustrates the precarious situation of the people; the situation was getting so bad that some were preparing to die. This verse may be the only reference to water in the book of Kings that is directly related to the drought and its consequences. Ernst Würthwein notes that Elijah performs the miracle without magic but with Yahweh's word.³⁴ This may be the case for 1 Kgs 17, but in other passages the magical aspect is evident, as we have seen.

A further reference to water occurs in 1 Kgs 18:4 and 13, part of the actual drought scene. These verses refer to the bread and water that Obadiah, an official in charge of the palace, gave to the prophets who were hiding from Jezebel in a cave. The prophets were kept alive by bread and water. This is more or less a casual and stereotypical reference, but it may have been occasioned by the common concern about water in the general context. Moreover, it again shows that bread and water were treated as a word pair, not unlike in 1 Kgs 13. A somewhat similar case is again found in 1 Kgs 22:27, which corroborates the fact that they indeed form a somewhat fixed and idiomatic pair. In 1 Kings 22:27 (and in its parallel in 2 Chr 18:26) a king of Israel, who is not mentioned by name, puts the prophet Micah into prison and orders that he may only be given bread and water until the king returns from his military campaign against Aram. In the background stands Micah's prophecy to the king that he will lose the battle against Aram and die, which comes to pass.

4. Other References to Water in the Book of Kings

There are only four references to water in the book of Kings in which prophets do not play a role in the same passage. In 2 Kgs 18 the Assyrian commander tries to incite rebellion against King Hezekiah. He

34 Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 213.

speaks to the people in order to convince them to give up defending the besieged Jerusalem. Water is mentioned two times in this passage, but the first one in v. 27 is in a euphemistic *q̄re*, which probably does not represent the original reading. According to the *q̄re*, the people who are in the besieged city are forced to eat their own “produce” (צֹואָתָם) and drink the “water of their feet” (מִיַּי רַגְלֵיהֶם). However, the *k̄tiv* explicitly refers to eating dung (חֲרִיָּהֶם) and drinking urine (שִׁינִי). Both, of course, refer to the same thing, but it is probable that the *k̄tivs* are more original.³⁵ The same passage contains another reference to water in v. 31. The Assyrian commander enjoins the Israelites to surrender, for then they would be able to drink water from their own well and be given even a better place to live. Both reference in 2 Kgs 18 are rather casual and the focus is not on water.

Second Kings 19:24 is part of Hezekiah’s prayer in which he boasts of having dug wells and drunk from foreign waters: אֲנִי קָרָתִי וּשְׁתִּיתִי מִיָּם זָרִים. The phrase clearly refers to his military campaigns and conquests outside Judah. This is corroborated by v. 24b, according to which Hezekiah has dried up the streams of Egypt with the sole of his foot. The phrase אֲנִי קָרָתִי וּשְׁתִּיתִי מִיָּם זָרִים may also be a fixed saying in reference to the building projects and conquests of an able king.³⁶ The sentence seeks to convey that the king, who had conquered his enemy, had power over the source of their livelihood. The passage contains the perception that the control of water was essential for the economy and ultimately for political power.

The final passage in Kings to mention water is found in 2 Kgs 20:20, which is the well-known reference to the water tunnel that Hezekiah built in Jerusalem, also known as the Siloam tunnel. It was a major undertaking to bring water into the city, which is also the reason why it was mentioned in what appears to be an excerpt from the royal annals.³⁷ The annals would have mentioned the most important building projects and other accomplishments of the kings. Control of water would have demonstrated the royal might,³⁸ and indeed one can see a

35 Thus most scholars, for example, Montgomery and Gehman, *Book of Kings*, 488–89 and Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 416. The *k̄tivs* are also supported by most Greek manuscripts.

36 Note, however, that the parallel in Isa 37:25 lacks the word זָרִים.

37 According to Würthwein, *Bücher der Könige*, 438, the text and formulations of 2 Kgs 20:20 mainly derive from a Deuteronomist, but the information concerning the water-tunnel was taken from the royal annals.

38 Similarly in Sennacherib’s aqueduct inscriptions at Jerwan; see Thorkild Jacobsen and Seton Lloyd, *Sennacherib’s Aqueduct at Jerwan* (OIP 24; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1935), 19–27.

similarity between these cases and cases where a divinity or a prophet demonstrates his power by controlling the element through a miracle or otherwise. As a natural or primeval element and a necessity of life, water was an ideal object for demonstrating one's power. In addition to 2 Kgs 18, but with reservations, this passage may be the only one of the discussed passages that derives from the royal annals. It is this kind of concern about the water supply that one would expect to find in the annals.³⁹

5. Summary

A survey of the references to water in the book of Kings has revealed that passages that refer to water often deal with prophets. This is the case in more than half of the passages. The result is highlighted by the fact that many of these passages additionally deal with miracles. Furthermore, there are a notable number of passages where the miracle is performed by using magic. These connections go beyond what could be merely coincidental, especially in view of the small number of references to water outside passages that deal with prophets (four; see chart below). The background for this particular connection with miracles may be that water was conceived to be an uncreated and primeval element. By controlling this element, one could demonstrate one's power. It was important for men of god, prophets, miracle men, and divinities to demonstrate that they were able to do things that others could not, thus showing that they were uniquely powerful. This motif is especially evident in 1 Kgs 18, where Elijah and Yahweh show their power over Baal and his prophets. Fire is a similar element and, indeed, in 1 Kgs 18 both water and fire are used in performing the miracle: fire miraculously kindles the altar although it is soaking wet. With the same motive of demonstrating one's power, control of the primeval elements is seen in creation stories as well as in many myths, for example, in the Babylonian creation story *Enuma Eliš* or in the battle between Yam and Baal in the Ugaritic Baal cycle.

39 Although the texts differ considerably and we are not dealing with an exact parallel, 2 Chr 32:30 ("Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David.") is probably dependent on the information in 2 Kgs 20:20. The Chronicler has reformulated the text, and his text is, in part, even more specific than that of the source. In any case, both focus on the accomplishments of Hezekiah.

Two passages (2 Kgs 19:24 and 20:20) refer to the control of water as a demonstration of royal power. Ultimately the idea is similar to that of miracle men or divinities controlling water. The king who can control water is a mighty king. One would also expect that the royal annals contained such references where the king was shown to have almost miraculous powers or at least more power than other mortals. Control of water was an ideal subject for this. Controlling water, the source of life, implicitly suggested that the king could control life itself. It is certainly no coincidence that demonstrations of power are a very common motif among the passages referring to water in the book of Kings. It also connects the passages dealing with the power of the king with those that demonstrate the power of a prophet, miracle man, or divinity. In view of the scarcity of water in the Levant, water is naturally connected to power in the texts from this area, including the Hebrew Bible. The same would be true of any substance that is scarce in a given context (cf. gold in general and its association with power in many cultures and contexts).

Passages dealing with the demonstration of power—that of a divinity, prophet, miracle man, or king—dwarf passages that imply a more direct concern about water and its scarcity.⁴⁰ There is a particular concern about the lack of water only in the drought narrative in 1 Kgs 17–19 and in Israel's campaign against Moab in 2 Kgs 3. Even in the drought scene in 1 Kgs 17–19, the focus is on the demonstration of Yahweh's power, while the drought only plays a role as the general theme. Although it is implicitly in the background of many passages, the authors and editors of Kings do not seem to be directly concerned about this substance as a resource. One would expect the royal annals to have noted severe droughts, but such events were not preserved in Kings.⁴¹ Some other themes connected to water are missing as well. For

40 When looking at the other words connected to water, the picture is not much different. For example, the word בֹּאֵר, "well," is never found in Kings, the word בִּיר, "cistern" or "well," only appears in 2 Kgs 10:14 and 18:31. The word מָטָר, "rain," is only found in connection with the drought story in 1 Kgs 17–18 and in Solomon's prayer (1 Kgs 8:35–36). The sea may be the most common other reference connected to water. It mostly refers to a geographical location (1 Kgs 5:9; 9:26, 27; 10:22; 18:43, 44; 2 Kgs 14:25) or the molten sea in the temple (1 Kgs 7:23, 24, 25, 39, 44; 2 Kgs 16:17; 25:13, 16). It is also used twice as part of a metaphor to refer to abundance (1 Kgs 4:20, 29).

41 For an overview of famines in the Levant, most of which are connected to drought, see Wolfgang Zwickel, "Hungersnöte in der südlichen Levante vom 14. Jh. v. Chr. Bis zum 1. Jh. n. Chr.," in *All the Wisdom of the East* (ed. M. Gruber et al.; OBO 255; Göttingen and Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and Academic Press, 2012), 453–

example, water is not prominently used as a source of purity in Kings, while in some other books, such as Leviticus, this is an important aspect of water. Only in 2 Kgs 5:12 does water have this aspect, but it is clearly marginal to the main theme, which is the demonstration of Yahweh's power. Water would naturally be seen as a destructive power in the Levant, as noted in the introduction, but this aspect is also missing in Kings.

Passage	Description	Prophet	Miracles
1 Kgs 13:8–22	The man of God may not eat and drink in Bethel; the old prophet invites him	man of God & the old prophet	
1 Kgs 14:15	Prophecy against Jeroboam	Ahia	
1 Kgs 17:10	Elijah asks for water and bread	Elijah	
1 Kgs 18:4, 13	Obadiah gives water and bread to the prophets	100 prophets of Yahweh	
1 Kgs 18:34–38	Elijah pours water on the altar	Elijah	*
1 Kgs 19:6	An angel gives Elijah food and water	Elijah	*
1 Kgs 22:27	Micah in jail: gets only bread and water	Micah	
2 Kgs 2:8	Elijah miraculously parts the waters	Elijah	*
2 Kgs 2:14	Elisha miraculously parts the waters	Elisha	*
2 Kgs 2:18–22	Elisha purifies the bad water	Elisha	*
2 Kgs 3:9, 17–20	Water miraculously comes out of the ground	Elisha	*
2 Kgs 3:11	Elisha as one who may pour water on the hands of Elijah	Elisha	
2 Kgs 3:22	Water miraculously becomes red	Elisha	*
2 Kgs 3:19, 25	Israel destroys all the water springs in Moab	Elisha	
2 Kgs 5:12	The miraculous healing of Naaman from leprosy	Elisha	*
2 Kgs 6:5	Elisha rescues a metal axe from water by a miracle	Elisha and his disciples	*

65. Zwickel implies that most droughts mentioned in the Hebrew Bible are historical events (see, for example, his discussion on 1 Kings 18 in pp. 460–61).

2 Kgs 6:22	Elisha miraculously blinds the Aramean army unit	Elisha	*
2 Kgs 8:15	Death ritual of Ben Hadad where a cloth is dipped in water	Elisha	
2 Kgs 18:27	The people of Jerusalem have to drink "water of their feet"		
2 Kgs 18:31	If Israelites surrender, they may drink water of their wells		
2 Kgs 19:24	Hezekiah has dug wells and drunk from foreign waters		
2 Kgs 20:20	Hezekiah brought water into the fortified city of Jerusalem		

Figure 1
List of passages referring to water in Kings

Water Control and Royal Propaganda: Sennacherib's Boast in 2 Kgs 19:24 (= Isa 37:25)

WILLIAM S. MORROW

Royalty and hydraulic projects were closely connected in antiquity. A few examples from the late Iron Age to the late Hellenistic period in the ancient Near East (the time period of the Hebrew Bible traditions surveyed in this paper):

- a) The Siloam tunnel, presumably built under the aegis of Hezekiah, was most likely intended to bring a water supply to the western part of an expanding Jerusalem (rather than as a means to thwart an impending siege).¹
- b) When Sennacherib moved the capital of the Neo-Assyrian empire to Nineveh, he enlarged and remodeled the city considerably. Between 703 and 690 BCE he engaged in extensive efforts to bring water into Nineveh including diverting water from Mt. Mušri.² Among his efforts was the construction of a 50 km. aquifer built in the space of 13 months (an engineering feat even by modern standards), complete with automatic sluice gates and retaining pools to deal with overflows.³
- c) Beginning in the late 7th century, the palace complex of Ramat Raḥel (just outside Jerusalem) was renovated to include what its excavators call a "royal garden." Despite the fact that Ramat Raḥel was built on a promontory with no running water, the garden was roughly 1.6 hec-

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- 1 Gary A. Rendsburg and William M. Schniedewind, "The Siloam Tunnel Inscription: Historical and Linguistic Perspectives," *IEJ* 60 (2010): 188–89. Scholarly consensus continues to date this project and its associated inscription to the eighth century. This *opinio communis* was challenged by Philip Davies and John Rogerson, "Was the Siloam Tunnel Built by Hezekiah," *BA* 59 (1996): 138–49. Their revisionist view, however, has been effectively refuted. See, e.g., Joanne Hackett et al., "Defusing Pseudo Scholarship: The Siloam Inscription Ain't Hasmonean," *BAR* 23 (1997): 41–51, 68; Stig Norin, "The Age of the Siloam Inscription and Hezekiah's Tunnel," *VT* 98 (1998): 37–48.
 - 2 Hayim Tawil, "The Historicity of 2 Kings 19:24 (=Isaiah 27:25): The Problem of *Ye'ōrē Māšōr*," *JNES* 41 (1982): 196–99.
 - 3 Aldo Tamburrino, "Water Technology in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Ancient Water Technologies* (2d ed.; ed. Larry W. Mays; Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 37–38.

tares in size, complete with ornamental pools and a sophisticated watering system that included covered tunnels.⁴

- d) In terms of scale, the diversion of the river Euphrates by Nebuchadnezzar II revivals the accomplishments of Sennacherib. His purpose was the renovation and refortification of Babylon, which entailed extensive construction of foundations, retaining walls, and canals.⁵ This achievement is described at length by Herodotus, who credits it, however, to the Babylonian queen, Nitocris.⁶
- e) The Persian kings provided their newly constructed capital, Persepolis, with a constant water supply despite its location on an arid plateau. This was accomplished by building a complex system of canals, underground storage facilities, and gutters.⁷
- f) Darius the Great either built or reconstructed a canal that ran from the Nile to the Red Sea.⁸ This monumental feat was recorded by Herodotus and confirmed by the discovery of the Shaluf stele in the 19th century.⁹
- g) Under the first two Ptolemies, a large amount of arable land was reclaimed in the Fayyum (in the Nile delta near the ancient capital city of Memphis). In the late 4th and early 3rd cent. their engineers drained the level of Lake Moeris by means of an elaborate system of dykes and dams to recover approximately 131,500 hectares for farming purposes.¹⁰ This effort represents one of the most impressive agricultural expansions in the ancient world.¹¹

Sennacherib's boast to have dried up "all the rivers of Egypt" seems to be an expression of an ideology that associated kingly prowess with the control of water resources in the ancient Near East. As it is part of a larger catalogue of heroic deeds set out in 2 Kgs 19:23–24 and the parallel text in Isaiah, I begin by determining the text and translation of these verses (§1). A discussion of their reference value as historical allu-

4 Oded Lipschits et. al., "Palace and Village, Paradise and Oblivion: Unraveling the Riddle of Ramat Rahel," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 74 (2011): 20–27.

5 Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 51–53.

6 Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), 69–70; see Herodotus, *Hist.* 1:185–89.

7 Mahdi Moradi-Jalal et. al., "Water Resource Management for Iran's Persepolis Project," in *Ancient Water Technologies* (ed. Larry W. Mays; 2d ed.; Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 87–102.

8 Carol A. Redmount, "The Wadi Tumilat and the 'Canal of the Pharaohs'," *JNES* 45 (1995): 135.

9 Herodotus, *Hist.* 2:158; Roland G. Kent, "Old Persian Texts," *JNES* 1 (1942): 416.

10 Larry W. Mays, "Water Technology in Ancient Egypt," in *Ancient Water Technologies* (ed. Larry W. Mays; 2d ed.; Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 61–64.

11 J. G. Manning, *Land and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), 104.

sions follows (§2). A literary-critical analysis of their larger context (§3), will lead to the observation that this prophecy of Isaiah was subject to various expegetical operations in antiquity, an interest visible both in the history its composition and in ancient translations (§4). I will conclude with some observations about the theology that underlies this theme and its connection to the claims of human kings (like Sennacherib) to control the waters (§5).

1. Text and Translation

Since the hand of the Deuteronomistic (Dtr) historian is plainly visible in the account of Hezekiah's confrontation with Sennacherib,¹² I side with the majority of scholars and assume the priority of the text in the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) over that of Isaiah.¹³ Nevertheless, there are grounds for thinking that the writer who adapted the narrative for its inclusion as Isaiah 36–39 used a slightly different version of 2 Kings 18–20 than the one found in the Masoretic Text (MT). In fact, both the Kings version and the Isaianic version may have experienced small changes during their transmission.¹⁴ Consequently, it is difficult to determine in some cases whether a textual variant represents a copying error or has arisen through a more complex process. In cases of

12 2 Kings 18:13 uses a typical Dtr dating formula (cf. 2 Kgs 12:7; 22:3; 23:33; 25:2, 8) and has the style of an invasion notice (cf. 1 Kgs 14:25; 2 Kgs 18:9); see Paul S. Evans, *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings: A Source-Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18–19*, (VTSup 125 Leiden: Brill, 2009), 40–41. 2 Kgs 18:22 is marked by a Dtr formula in which the removal of illegitimate cultic installations is predicated with the verb הִסִּיר (cf. 2 Kgs 18:5; 23:9); see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Who Wrote the Speech of the Rabshakeh and When?" *JBL* 109 (1990): 85; Nadav Na'aman, "Updating the Messages: Hezekiah's Second Prophetic Story (2 Kings 19:9b–35) and the Community of Babylonian Deportees," in 'Like a Bird in a Cage': *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 363; London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 218–19. The use of the verb נָצַל in 2 Kgs 18:28–35 also echoes characteristic Dtr vocabulary (37 times in the DtrH outside of 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37). Another prominent locus containing Dtr motifs is Hezekiah's prayer in 19:15–19; see Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, (SBT 3; London: SCM, 1967), 99; Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings*, (AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 243; Evans, *Sennacherib*, 49.

13 The nature of the discussion is summarized in Ludger Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild: Analyse und Interpretation von 2 Kön 18–20* (MThA 9; Altenberge: Telos, 1990), 53–61. For an opinion advocating the priority of the account in Isaiah, see Klaas A. D. Smeelik, *Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography*, (OTS 28; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 97–101.

14 Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 363.

more or less equal probability, I follow the Kings-text (used as the text of reference below) because it represents the context from which the Isaianic version was derived.

v. 23aα

Isa 37:24 reads עבדיך instead of מלאכֶיךָ. This case could go either way. One could argue that the Isaiah-text is preferable because it preserves the word pair עבד/אֲדוֹן.¹⁵ But the reading מלאכֶיךָ connects better with the preceding narrative, which records the reception of letters from the hands of Sennacherib's messengers (v.14) as the incident that sets in motion the events leading to Isaiah's oracles of assurance in vv. 21–34.

v. 23aβ

The Kings-text reads ברכב רכבי whereas Isa 37:24 reads ברכב רכבי. The *kētib* of v. 23 suggests an infinitive construct followed by a cognate accusative;¹⁶ however, this root does not appear with a cognate accusative elsewhere in biblical Hebrew. The construction attested in the MT is רכב ברכב (Jer 17:25; 22:4). The *qērê* for the Kings-text agrees with the *kētib* in Isa 37:24; it is followed here.

v. 23bα

Many ancient versions (Vss) and modern translators want to revocalize וְאָכְרַת and the other coordinated verbs in the Prefixed Conjugation (PC) in vv. 23–24 as *vav*-consecutives, so reading וְאָכְרַת and וְאָבֹאֶה in v. 23 and וְאָחֲרַב in v. 24. The text, however, is capable of representing a narrative sequence in past time using the *vav*-consecutive as is clear from the opening of v. 23 וְהָאֵשׁ ... תִּרְפָּק. This raises the question as to whether emendation is necessary.

Some insight into this problem can be gleaned from considering other cases in which a verb in the Suffixed Conjugation (SC) at the beginning of a clause is carried on by a PC marked by simple *vav*. The following cases occur in the Latter Prophets. In presenting them, the data are broken down into two groups: those where the ancient Vss do not suggest that they read ו + PC as a *vav*-consecutive (Textually Certain) and those where at least one ancient version has (Textually Uncertain):

15 Ibid., 411.

16 Francolino J. Gonçalves, *L'Expédition de Sennachérib en Palestine dans la littérature hébraïque ancienne* (EBib 7; Paris: Gabalda, 1988), 446. Gonçalves supports his opinion with reference to Jer 51:21; but the form רכבו used there is ambiguous. The pronominal suffix does not necessarily indicate the use of the root רכב governing a cognate accusative.

Textually Certain	Textually Uncertain
Isa 25:9	Isa 10:13b α
Isa 41:26	Isa 10:13b β
Isa 43:9	Isa 42:6
Isa 57:18a	Isa 43:4
Jer 6:27	Isa 57:17
Hos 4:6	Isa 57:18b
Hos 4:19	Isa 63:5
Hos 6:1	Jer 23:18
Zeph 2:11	

Support for following the pointing of the MT in 2 Kgs 19:23 can be gained from three vantage points. First, it is clear from the list above that constructions involving the sequence SC coordinated by ׀ + PC forms appear in prophetic texts. Second, the MT has shown itself capable of distinguishing *vav*-consecutive constructions from ׀ + PC forms, as demonstrated by the opening of v. 23 (see above). Third, the inconsistent treatment of Isa 57:18 in the LXX raises the suspicion that there is a *Tendenz* in the ancient Vss to flatten the reading tradition to the syntactical pattern SC followed by *vav*-consecutive forms. The MT of Isa 57:18 consists of an SC followed by three verbs, all marked as ׀ + PC. There are no textual variants on the construction ואֵרפָּאוּ (the first clause in the coordinated series) and the LXX follows the tradition of the MT in interpreting this verb-form as an expression in incomplete time (ιασάμην); however, the forms ואֵנַחֲדוּ and ואֵשְׁלֵם are both translated in past time by the LXX. For these reasons, I do not follow the notes of *BHS* on vv. 23–24, which want to emend cases of ׀ + PC to *vav*-consecutive forms when confronted by evidence from the Vss.

The translation value of the construction SC coordinated by simple *vav* also needs to be addressed in both vv. 23b and 24. The use of the personal pronoun to specify the subject of these SC constructions suggests expressions of self-assertion; examples in Biblical Hebrew are typically indicative rather than cohortative.¹⁷ Consequently, the mood of the PC clauses in vv. 23b and 24 is likely indicative. Since simple *vav* + PC typically indicates a final clause when following a volitive,¹⁸ the constructions in vv. 23–24 probably do not indicate result or purpose. The simple *vav* on the PC forms in v. 23b and v. 24b is best interpreted as an unmarked connector that indicates a clause logically or temporal-

17 Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §16.3.2e

18 Ibid., 563.

ly subordinate to its predecessor.¹⁹ The fact that these verbs are Imperfect in form suggests that the SC constructions they coordinate also have a present or incomplete nuance, rather than representing events in past time.

v. 23bβ

The phrase מלון קצה is difficult to interpret. The LXX of Kings found the word מלון untranslatable and simply transliterated it as part of the phrase μελον τέλους αὐτοῦ. Isa 37:24 contains the more easily understandable text, reading מרום instead of מלון. Elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew מלון means 'a lodging place for the night' (e.g., Gen 42:27; 43:21; Exod 4:24; Jos 4:3, 8). As the mountains of Lebanon were proverbial as a source of building materials for centuries, I think it likely that shelters were built in the mountains for timber cutters. Consequently, while the phrase מלון קצה is unusual, it is both the harder reading and not entirely devoid of sense.²⁰

v. 24a

The combination קרתי ושתיתי represents two SC forms coordinated with simple *vav*. One might expect the second verb to be in the *vav*-consecutive; but there are a number of cases in which a simple *vav* coordinates two SC forms. This construction arises particularly when one action is not considered to be subordinate to the other but both connote different aspects of the same event (e.g., Isa 1:2b; Ezek 17:24b).²¹

The meaning of the verb קרתי is unclear. Some commentators want to discover a form of the root קרר which connotes "coldness" (cf. קרר in the LXX).²² But this cannot be correct. The form קרתי is vocalized as a middle-weak Qal SC of the root קור. Moreover, if the verb קרר were attested in the Qal in Biblical Hebrew it would mean "to be cool." A transitive or factitive meaning of the kind sought in a translation such as "I cooled" would require another *binyān* (in either the D- or the H-stem) as shown by the lexica of rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic.

Targum Jonathan for both Kings and Isaiah understands the root קור by the phrase "to dig wells:" חפר גובין.²³ The interpretation "dig" is also common in modern commentaries and translations. Presumably the root קור is related

19 Ibid., §33.4b

20 pace Wildberger, *Isaiah* 28–39, 412.

21 Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Hebrew Syntax*, §32.3a.

22 See, e.g., Mattiyahu Tsevat, "Some Biblical Notes," *HUCA* 24 (1952–53): 109; and Shawn Zelig Aster, "What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard: On the Use of Assyrian Sources in the Prophetic Narrative of the Campaign of 701 BCE [Hebrew]," *Shnaton* 19 (2009): 112–13.

23 See the translations in Daniel J. Harrington and Anthony J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (ArBib 10; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987), 303; Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (ArBib 11; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987), 73.

to the common Hebrew noun מקור meaning “spring” (cf. Phoenician קר “fountain” and Ugaritic קר “spring, well”).²⁴ Unfortunately, none of these North West Semitic languages attest a verbal form of the root קור. Recently, Richard Hess has revived an earlier suggestion that the verbs הקיר and הקרה in Jer 6:7 should be construed as H-stem forms of the root קור.²⁵ However, the interpretation of Jer 6:7 remains disputed and others find derivation of its verb forms from קר more plausible.²⁶ Consequently, one must admit some uncertainty hovers over the translation of קרתי in 2 Kgs 19:24. For lack of better evidence, my translation follows the targumic tradition.

v. 24aβ

Isa 37:25 lacks an equivalent to the adjective זרים in the phrase מים זרים. This may be due to a copying error (haplography of the plural ending). The Kings-text seems more original.²⁷

v. 24b

The Vss do not recognize the word מצור as a poetic equivalent for Egypt, deriving it from a root צור which has connotations of “seige” and “fortification.”²⁸ Support for understanding the phrase יארי מצור as a reference to Egypt rests on two bases. First, the same phrase occurs in Isa 19:6, in the context of an oracle against Egypt. Second, the Hebrew word יאור is derived from the Egyptian word for the Nile (‘io’r). In Hebrew יאור often appears in the plural (cf. Exod 7:19; Isa 7:18) and reflects the fact that in the Delta region the Nile divides into number of channels.²⁹ The combination of יאור with מצור in v. 24 reinforces the connection of this phrase with Egypt.

Consequently, I translate 2 Kgs 19:23–24 as follows:

By means of your messengers you have reviled my Lord and said, “With my numerous chariots I ascend to the mountain heights, the furthest reaches of Lebanon, I cut down its highest cedars, its choicest cyprus, and I enter its remotest shelters, its most luxurious forests. I dig up and I drink foreign waters, and I dry up all the rivers of Egypt with the soles of my feet.”

24 A. Murtonen, *Hebrew in Its West Semitic Setting: A Comparative Survey of Non-Masoretic Hebrew Dialects and Traditions. Part One. A Comparative Lexicon* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 373.

25 Richard S. Hess, “Hiphil Forms of QWR in Jeremiah VI 7,” *VT* 41 (1991): 347–49.

26 See, e.g., Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, (AB 21A New York: Doubleday, 1999), 419–20; Aster, “What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard,” 113.

27 Wildberger, *Isaiah* 28–39, 412.

28 T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, (WBC 13 Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985), 268.

29 Mordechai Cogan, “Nahum: With Introduction and Commentary [Hebrew],” in *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (ed. Shmuel Ahituv and Miqra leYisrael; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2006), 54.

2. The Historical Reference Value of 2 Kings 19:23–24

Since Peter Machinist's seminal essay, it has been generally recognized that the motif of cutting trees in the Lebanon echoes the boasts of Neo-Assyrian kings.³⁰ The point is reinforced by Shawn Zelig Aster, who notes that kings of Judah and Israel did not use this image as part of their own repertoire of self-praise.³¹ In the vocabulary of comparative literary studies, therefore, bragging of expeditions to the mountains of Lebanon is a "blind motif" with respect to the literary patrimony of ancient Israel.³²

A question arises as to whether it is possible to find a particular historical context for the deeds claimed by the Assyrian king. Since their ostensible agent is Sennacherib, some scholars have tried to find specific connections between 2 Kgs 19:23–24 and his royal inscriptions.³³ A difficulty with relating Sennacherib to the expeditions of Lebanon, however, is that his inscriptions uniformly link his building projects with wood cutting in the mountain ranges of Amanus and Sirara.³⁴ While there may be a fragmentary text (now lost) that connects Lebanon with Sennacherib, the same information is not found in his annals and related documents.³⁵ By the same token, there is no indication that Sennacherib's actions against Egypt were so substantial as to justify the

30 Peter Machinist, "The Image of Assyria in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 723–24.

31 Aster, "What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard," 109.

32 The term "blind motif" comes from John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1975), 163; see Jeffrey Tigay, "On Evaluating Claims of Literary Borrowing," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (ed. Mark E. Cohen, Daniel C. Snell, and David B. Weisberg; Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993), 255. A blind motif is a literary image or expression that cannot be explained in terms of its own context, but reflects a process of borrowing from another source or culture.

33 See, e.g., Tsevat, "Some Biblical Notes," 109; Tawil, "The Historicity of 2 Kings 19:24," William Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (SHCANE 18; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 232; Aster, "What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard," 111–12.

34 Aster, "What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard," 109–11.

35 Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 232. The lost epigraph was published in translation by Layard in 1853; its provenance is thought to be Sennacherib's Southwest Palace. It records some objects of wood "brought from Mt. Lebanon and taken up (to the top of the mound) from the Tigris" according to the translation in John Malcolm Russell, *Sennacherib's "Palace Without Rival" at Nineveh* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 277–78. The meaning of this inscription is ambiguous, however, as it stops short of indicating that Sennacherib conducted an expedition to the Levant for timber. It is possible that it represents tribute from a Phoenician province or client-state.

sweeping declaration of v. 24. Hayim Tawil tried to find a more literal application of the claim to “dry up the waters” by interpreting the lexeme מִצּוֹר as a reference to Sennacherib’s diversion of the water of Mt. Mušri, during his massive renovations of Nineveh; however, as shown above, the phrase כל מִצּוֹר יֵאָרֵי refers to Egypt.³⁶

Another set of commentators has abandoned the attempt to find an historical connection with Judah’s experience of Neo-Assyrian domination. They interpret the text as indicating well-known characteristics of Assyrian warfare or propaganda in a more general fashion.³⁷ None of these commentators (including those referred to in the previous paragraph), however, have interpreted the text using the syntactical considerations set out above. There are two distinct actions, each marked with SC constructions. The Assyrian king claims that he can ascend the mountains of Lebanon and exploit its forests; he can also dig wells, drink foreign waters, then dry up the Nile delta.

The Assyrian monarch who best matches these actions is Esarhaddon. In the case of expeditions for timber from the Lebanon, Esarhaddon boasts that he ordered twenty-two kings of Ḫatti, including Manasseh, king of Judah,

...to drag to Nineveh, my lordly city, with exertion and difficulty, large timbers, long beams, (and) thin boards of cedar and cyprus, the product of Mount Sirara and Mount Lebanon, that from olden days grew exceedingly thick and long; (also) bull colossi of granite, *lamassu* and *apsasatu* figures, thresholds and building stone of alabaster and granite, colored (?) marble, *alallu*, and *girinḫilba* stone, the products of the mountains.³⁸

Esarhaddon also bragged about his conquest of Egypt.³⁹ In 671, rather than take a route that would have brought him along the coast, the

36 Tawil, “The Historicity of 2 Kings 19:24.” Tawil’s opinion has not been followed in later scholarship, cf. Gonçalves, *L’Expédition de Sennachérib*, 486; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 237; Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 230; Aster, “What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard,” 116–17.

37 For example, Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige 1. Kön. 17–2. Kön. 25*, (ATD 11/2; Göttingen: Vanhoek & Ruprecht, 1984), 430–41; Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 378; Marvin Sweeney, *1 & 2 Kings: A Commentary*, (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 418. Of these opinions, the least plausible is Sweeney’s, who assumes that behind these claims is a rather extensive knowledge of Mesopotamian mythology. But he provides no rationale to account for the transmission of these ideas to Judah.

38 Esarhaddon’s Prism Nineveh A, col. v, 73b–vi, 1. The translation is from Mordechai Cogan, *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating to Ancient Israel* (Carta: Jerusalem, 2008), 133.

39 The association between 2 Kgs 19:24b and Esarhaddon was made previously by Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 237.

Assyrian army marched across the desert catching the Egyptians by surprise.⁴⁰ This daring military venture was possible because of the aid given to the Assyrian army by Arab allies, who helped it secure water supplies in anticipation of the desert march. Esarhaddon describes the conduct of this military campaign as follows:

[I marched] to the city Raphia, which is in the neighborhood of the Brook of Egypt, a place that has no river(s). By means of ropes, chains, (and) sweeps, I provided water for (my) troops drawn from wells. In accordance with the command of the god Aššur, my lord, it occurred to me and my heart [prompted me] (and thus) I col[lected] camels from all of the Arab kings [and lo]aded them with [water skins (and) water containers]. I advanced twenty leagues distance, a journey of fifteen days, over [difficult] sand dunes, [where (one is always) thirsty]...The god Marduk, the great lord, came to my aid [...] he revived my troops. Twenty days (and) seven [...] of the border of Egy[pt], I stayed overnight. [...] from the city Mig[dol] to [Memphis ...] I advanced a distance of forty leagues...⁴¹

These deeds of Esarhaddon would have been well known to the intellectuals of Judah. In the case of his timber expedition to the Lebanon and its transport to Nineveh, the inscription makes it plain that Judah was required to participate. Esarhaddon's victory over Egypt was the subject of various inscriptions, including a stele set up in Zinçirli and a text carved on an outcrop facing the sea near the mouth of the Nahr-el-Kelb in Lebanon.⁴² While it is not to be expected that Judah's scribes could read Akkadian, there is reason to view these inscriptions as literary expressions of propaganda efforts meant to reach the populations subject to Assyria.⁴³

In terms of the historical situation faced by Hezekiah in 701, reference to the deeds of Esarhaddon is an anachronism. There is other evidence in 2 Kings 18–20 that the DtrH was writing well after the events of 701. Most obvious is the description of Sennacherib's assassination by his sons (2 Kgs 19:37), which took place in 680. Another anachro-

40 Donald B. Redford, "Tirhaqah," *ABD* 6:572.

41 Translation extracts from Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)* (RINAP 4; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011) §34, 16'-rev. 13.

42 Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, 140.

43 See Mario Liverani, "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (ed. Mogens T. Larsen; Mesopotamia/Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology 7; Copenhagen: Akademisk, 1979), 300–303; Barbara Porter, "'For the Astonishment of All Enemies': Assyrian Propaganda and Its Audiences in the Reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Esarhaddon," *Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies Bulletin* 35 (2000): 11–13.

nism appears in the report of 2 Kgs 19:9 assigning the leadership of the Egyptian force met by Sennacherib to Tirhaqah, “king of Cush.”⁴⁴ A further historical infelicity is the mention of the conquest of Harran, supposedly by Sennacherib’s ancestors according to 2 Kgs 19:12. In fact, Harran was a city that enjoyed royal patronage throughout the period Assyria dominated Israel and Judah. It was destroyed, however, after it became the last bastion of the Neo-Assyrian empire, by a coalition of Medes and Babylonians in 610–609.⁴⁵ Its destruction marked the end of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the rise of Neo-Babylonian dominance of the ancient Near East.

The account in 2 Kings 18:14–19:37, therefore, shows signs it has combined various historical events into a single narrative. A further indication of its departure from the historical record can be found in 2 Kgs 18:14–16. This account appears to be chronologically out of place in comparison with Sennacherib’s annals, which portray Hezekiah’s tribute as the final result of his capitulation.

It was not the case that an offering of tribute always resulted in the cessation of conflict, as Esarhaddon’s treatment of the kingdom of Shubria shows.⁴⁶ But a connection between the tribute recorded in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 and that received by Sennacherib is reinforced by the recognition that the amount of gold tribute that Hezekiah gave to Assyria matches the amount listed in the annals of Sennacherib’s third campaign.⁴⁷ The Dtr writer may have altered the chronology as a narrative technique to underscore the Assyrian king’s destructive intentions. Evidently not content with Hezekiah’s capitulation, Sennacherib intended the complete reduction of Judah and Jerusalem. A similar motif appears in 1 Kgs 20:1–30.⁴⁸

44 Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 222–23; Jeffrey Goldberg, “Two Assyrian Campaigns against Hezekiah and Later Eighth Century Biblical Chronology,” *Bib* 80 (1999): 361.

45 Steven W. Holloway, “Harran: Cultic Geography in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its Implications for Sennacherib’s ‘Letter to Hezekiah’ in 2 Kings,” in *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy; JSOTSup 190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 313–14; Na’aman, “Updating the Messages,” 212–13.

46 Israel Eph’al, “Esarhaddon, Egypt, and Shubria: Politics and Propaganda,” *JCS* 57 (2005): 99–100.

47 Col. III: 34. Edition used: Rykle Borger, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke* (2nd ed.; AnOr 54; Roma: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1979), 75. See also Bob Becking, “Sennacherib and Jerusalem: New Perspectives,” *Journal for Semitics* 16 (2007): 268–69.

48 Evans, *Sennacherib*, 107.

There is also a possibility that the Dtr narrator has conflated more than one encounter between Hezekiah and the Assyrian empire. Some scholars have proposed that 2 Kings 18:14–19:37 conflates two campaigns against Judah, with the second occurring after Sennacherib's eighth campaign in 689. While this hypothesis can claim the formidable support of Assyriologist, A. Kirk Grayson, there is no evidence for such a campaign and this hypothesis should be dismissed.⁴⁹ There are reasons for thinking, however, that Hezekiah may have had a run-in with Assyria prior to Sennacherib's invasion. According to 2 Kgs 18:8, Hezekiah extended Judah's sphere of influence through the conquest of Philistine territory, including the city of Gath. Recent excavations at Tell-es-Safi (ancient Gath) show that the Judahite occupation layer was reduced two times at the end of the 8th cent., likely once by Sargon II and once by Sennacherib.⁵⁰ Moreover, Sargon II describes himself as "the subduer of Judah."⁵¹ The combination of archaeological and textual evidence supports suggestions that Hezekiah was involved in some kind of military conflict with Assyria prior to the death of Sargon II.⁵² However, it is not apparent that there are memories of this earlier *contemps* between Hezekiah and Sargon II in the narrative of 2 Kgs 18:14–19:37.⁵³

The probability that the notice in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 is out of place chronologically reinforces the view that the narrative in 2 Kgs 18:14–19:37 is tendentious as a historical account. It has evidently combined

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- 49 Paul E. Dion, "Sennacherib's Expedition to Palestine," *Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies* 48 (1988): 19 n. 38; Becking, "Sennacherib and Jerusalem," 273–74; cf. A. Kirk Grayson, "Sennacherib," *ABD* 5:1089.
- 50 Jeffrey R. Chadwick and Aren M. Maeir, "How Households Can Illuminate the Historical Record: The Judahite Houses at Gath of the Philistines," in *New Perspectives on Household Archaeology* (ed. Bradley J. Parker and Catherine P. Foster; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 515.
- 51 *mu-šak-miš* ^{kur}*Ia-ú-da* according to Sargon II's Nimrud Inscription; see Becking, "Sennacherib and Jerusalem," 272; *ARAB* 2: §137.
- 52 See J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2d ed.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 404–7. My conclusion does not depend on whether the Azekah-inscription is dated to the reign of Sargon II or Sennacherib. For literature and discussion on this issue, see Becking, "Sennacherib and Jerusalem," 272 n. 20 and Manfred Weippert, *Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament* (GAT 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 336.
- 53 Goldberg ("Two Assyrian Campaigns against Hezekiah," 362–63) has suggested the notice that tribute was paid to the king of Assyria by Hezekiah before Jerusalem was directly threatened can be explained by assuming that this account refers to an earlier payment to Assyria as indemnity for disloyal actions. But the fact that identical amounts of gold are recorded in 2 Kgs 18:14 and Sennacherib's annals connects Hezekiah's tribute to the events of 701.

and reorganized various encounters between Judah and Mesopotamia for theological purposes. I will return to the significance of these anachronisms in §5 below.

3. Literary Critical Context of 2 Kgs 19:23–24

Literary criticism of 2 Kings 18–19 has been significantly influenced by the work of Bernhard Stade and its later qualification by Brevard Childs.⁵⁴ Many critics have followed what is commonly called the Stade-Childs hypothesis, in which the text is divided into three strands: A (18:[13] 14–16); B1 (18:17–19:9a; 36–37); B2 (19:9b–35).⁵⁵ A key feature in the distinction of B2 from B1 was the perception that these two accounts were parallel in structure. This led to the suggestion that in origin they represented two distinct retellings of a commonly shared oral source.⁵⁶ A number of developments, however, suggest that the Stade-Childs hypothesis ought to be abandoned. The hypothesis of two independent but parallel retellings of the same oral tradition is problematic.⁵⁷ Work by Francolino Gonçalves and others shows that B2 is literarily dependent on B1.⁵⁸ Once it is admitted that B2 is based on B1, the possibility of a unified composition by a single Dtr hand that comprehends material from both B1 and B2 presents itself. So, e.g., Paul Evans presses for the conclusion that the text of 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37 is the product of a single author.⁵⁹

54 Bernhard Stade, "Miscellen: Anmerkungen zu 2 Kö. 15–21," ZAW 6 (1886): 172–83; Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 69–103.

55 Naturally, there have been minor modifications to the Stade-Childs hypothesis; for recent surveys of the literature see Lester L. Grabbe, "Two Centuries of Sennacherib Study: A Survey," in 'Like a Bird in a Cage: The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE' (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 363; London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 26–34; Evans, *Sennacherib*, 4–15.

56 Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 103.

57 Gonçalves, *L'Expédition de Sennachérib*, 478.

58 Gonçalves (*L'Expédition de Sennachérib*, 479) points to the near literal repetition of 2 Kgs 18:29–30 in 2 Kgs 19:10. Other indicators include parallelism between 19:4 and 19:16 (Evans, *Sennacherib*, 48–49) and the repetition of vocabulary between 18:22 and 19:10; 18:30, 32 and 19:11 (see Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 98). See also Camp, *Hiskija*, 260–66; Christof Hardmaier, *Prophetie im Streit vor dem Untergang Judas: Erzählkommunikative Studien zur Entstehungssituation der Jesaja- und Jeremiaerzählungen in II Reg 18–20 und Jer 37–40* (BZAW 187; Berlin: de Gruyter 1989), 427; Eberhard Ruprecht "Die ursprüngliche Komposition der Hiskia-Jesaja-Erzählungen und ihre Umstrukturierung durch den Verfasser des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerkes," ZTK 87 (1994): 61.

59 Evans, *Sennacherib*, 168.

Along with many critics, I perceive behind the report of the first Assyrian embassy (2 Kgs 18:17–9:7) a prophetic story that was probably transmitted orally.⁶⁰ It is difficult to discern the exact dimensions of the story the Dtr writer drew on; but it likely resembled the plot of the putative source B1. Presumably it told of an embassy to Hezekiah from Sennacherib demanding complete and unconditional surrender. King Hezekiah's reliance on Isaiah's encouragement to resist was vindicated; and Sennacherib was unable to carry through his plans although the reasons for doing so are now obscure. In that respect, I find it difficult to remove some version of 2 Kgs 19:35, which tells of a devastation of the Assyrian army by supernatural means, from this pre-Dtr source.⁶¹

Reasons for perceiving a traditional substrate to this part of the text include its various echoes with Isaianic material and resonances with Neo-Assyrian rhetoric. The motif of the worthlessness in trusting Egypt (2 Kgs 18:21) has echoes in Isa 30:1–3; 31:1–3; and the idea that the King of Assyria has a commission from YHWH to punish Judah (18:25) has resonance with Isa 10:5–6.⁶² More than this, there are a number of correspondences with the prophetic narrative in Isa 7:1–9. Not only does the interview with Assyrian embassy take place in the same place (cf. Isa 7:3 and 2 Kgs 18:17), but Hezekiah seems to be depicted as the antitype of Ahaz in terms of his piety and trust in Isaiah.⁶³

Identification of a narrative substrate to 2 Kings 18–19 can also benefit from locating resonances of Assyrian phraseology. Here I will only identify the most certain:

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- 60 So, e.g., Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 78; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 243; Gonçalves, *L'Expédition de Sennachérib*, 441; Na'aman, "Updating the Messages," 216. The writer(s) of the DtrH probably had knowledge of various prophetic stories, the tale of Hezekiah and Sennacherib being one of them; see Hugh G. M. Williamson, "In Search of the Pre-Exilic Isaiah," in *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel* (ed. John Day; JSOTSup 406; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 185.
- 61 The account of Jerusalem's liberation by a miraculous act of God (understood as an epidemic) may have telescoped the events of weeks into a single event; see Wolfram Von Soden, "Sanherib vor Jerusalem," in *Bibel und Orient: Altorientalische Beiträge zum Alten Testament* (ed. Hans-Peter Müller; BZAW 162; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1985), 149–57.
- 62 See, e.g., Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 84; Ronald E. Clements, *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: A Study of the Interpretation of Prophecy in the Old Testament* (JSOTSup 13; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 54–55; Gonçalves, *L'Expédition de Sennachérib*, 434; Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 173.
- 63 Gonçalves, *L'Expédition de Sennachérib*, 437–38. Dominic Rudman ("Is the Rabshakeh also among the Prophets: A Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings XVII 17–35," *VT* 50 [2000]: 103) describes the *rab šāqē* as kind of counter-prophet who speaks for Sennacherib as Isaiah speaks for YHWH.

- the epithet, “the great king,” is attested in Hittite and Ugaritic sources as well as in Mesopotamia.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, this would be a typical appellation to place on the lips of emissaries of a Neo-Assyrian monarch. If, as seems likely, there is a memory in the Sennacherib story of an Assyrian embassy to Hezekiah, it is reasonable to regard the title, “the great king,” in 2 Kgs 18:19 as a reflex of Assyrian rhetoric.
- the introduction of the speech to the people on the wall as “word of the king” (18:28) is a standard way of introducing an Assyrian message.⁶⁵
- the phrase אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָצוֹת in 18:35 reflects Akkadian *ilānī māṭāti*.⁶⁶
- the names of the three high Assyrian officials listed as part of the embassy: תַּרְתָּן (Akkadian: *tartānu*), רַב סָרִיס (Akkadian: *rab ša-rēši*), and שָׁקֵה רַב (Akkadian: *rab šāqê*).⁶⁷ Although the biblical story represents three senior Assyrian officials as part of the embassy to Jerusalem, 2 Kgs 19:9 reports only the return of the שָׁקֵה רַב to Lachish. I assume, with Gonçalves, that the mention of the תַּרְתָּן and the רַב סָרִיס was added to give additional colouring to the story.⁶⁸

I take the position that the narrative in 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37 (absent some secondary features) is likely the product of a single Dtr author in the exilic period. The purpose of combining this tale with the chronologically out of place account of Merodach-Baladan’s embassy to Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20 was probably to put this tradition in perspective: exilic readers were to understand that Jerusalem’s preservation from the ravages of Sennacherib was not a precedent for its treatment by the Neo-Babylonian empire.⁶⁹ This writer has used at least two sources, however, to construct the narrative. One of these was probably a chro-

64 For references see Chaim Cohen, “Neo-Assyrian Elements in the First Speech of the Biblical Rab-Šāqê,” *IOS* 9 (1979): 38–39; Dion, “Sennacherib’s Expedition to Palestine,” 6; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 230–31.

65 Dion, “Sennacherib’s Expedition to Palestine,” 6–7.

66 Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 190–91. The phrase אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָצוֹת appears nowhere else in Biblical Hebrew, which prefers אֱלֹהֵי גוֹיִם, cf. Deut 29:17; 2 Kgs 18:33 and 19:12 (=Isa 36:18 and 37:12).

67 It was typical for the *tartānu* and the *rab ša-rēši* to represent the Assyrian king in the field in the absence of the monarch himself (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 162). Cogan and Tadmor (*II Kings*, 23) are wrong, however, to claim that the *rab šāqê* never took part in military campaigns. There are indications of a military role for the *rab šāqê* in various Neo-Assyrian letters published in Henry W. F. Saggs, *The Nimrud Letters*, 1952 (Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud 5; London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001), cf. ND 2463; 2666 (side, 41); 2488 (rev. 1’–14’).

68 Gonçalves, *L’Épédition de Sennachérib*, 395. Evans’ (*Sennacherib*, 154) discussion of the semantic field of the phrase כְּבַד בְּחַיִּל (2 Kgs 18:17) reinforces this impression, as the phrase may connote a military escort rather than a large army. For the opposite point of view, cf. Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 230; Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 167–68.

69 Evans, *Sennacherib*, 194–95.

nistic account of the reign of Hezekiah;⁷⁰ the other was the prophetic story mentioned above.

It is likely that the narrative has experienced some secondary authorship. Probable cases include alterations to the speech of the רַב שָׁקָה. Resolution of shifts between first person and third person references leads to the recognition of an original speech representing the position of Sennacherib (18:19–22a, 25) and a secondary elaboration in 18:22b–24.⁷¹ There have also been insertions in the oracles of Isaiah. A more original form of Isaiah's assurance to Hezekiah in 2 Kings 19 probably comprised vv. 20, 33–34.⁷² In other words, the immediate context of 2 Kgs 19:23–24 is a secondary interpolation into the text consisting of vv. 21–28; a later addition to Isaiah's prophecy was inserted in vv. 29–31.⁷³

4. 2 Kgs 19:23–24 and Early Exegesis of Isaiah's Second Oracle

The expansions of Isaiah's prophecy in 2 Kgs 19:20, 33–34 with the material in vv. 21–28 and 29–31 indicate an ongoing interest among early interpreters of the Hebrew Bible to strengthen the prophetic critique of the arrogance of Judah's foreign rulers and the challenge their domination represented to the claims of Israel's god. Interest in reinterpreting Isaiah's defiant oracle continues in the transmission of the text by the LXX.

70 Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 163; Na'aman, "Updating the Messages," 216.

71 Jerome T. Walsh, "The Rab Šāqēh between Rhetoric and Redaction," *JBL* 130 (2011): 278.

72 Gonçalves, *L'Expédition de Sennachérib*, 455.

73 See Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 96–97; Gonçalves, *L'Expédition de Sennachérib*, 485; and Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 486–87. Evans (*Sennacherib*, 55–58) has objected to viewing 2 Kgs 19:21–28 as a secondary addition, pointing out vocabulary links with earlier parts of the narrative through the repetition of the key terms חָרַף (cf. 19:4, 16, 22 and 23) and גָּדַף (cf. 19:6, 22). He suggests that the perception of redactional activity amounts to circular reasoning without additional independent evidence. However, there are several grounds for viewing vv. 21–28 as secondary. Childs (*Assyrian Crisis*, 103) points out its affinities with the theology of the Second Isaiah. To this observation can now be added the linguistic data set out for v. 23bα in §1 above: a substantial number of prophetic texts using the syntax SC followed by ך + PC occur in the work of the Second Isaiah. The evidence of the Vss surveyed below in §4 indicates that Isaiah's oracle beginning in 19:20 was subject to exegetical efforts. Finally, signs of secondary authorship occur elsewhere in this narrative (see n. 71).

In the case of the LXX, while the translation of the MT seems more or less straightforward regarding 2 Kgs 19:23–24, the matter is more complex with respect to Isa 37:24–25. Here the LXX reads:

²⁴ ὅτι δι' ἀγγέλων ὠνειδίσας κύριον· σὺ γὰρ εἶπας
Τῷ πληθύνει τῶν ἀμάρτων ἐγὼ ἀνέβην εἰς ὕψος ὁρέων καὶ εἰς τὰ ἔσχατα τοῦ
Λιβάνου καὶ ἔκοψα τὸ ὕψος τῆς κέδρου αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ κάλλος τῆς κυπαρίσσου
καὶ εἰσῆλθον εἰς ὕψος μέρους τοῦ δρυμοῦ
²⁵ καὶ ἔθηκα γέφυραν καὶ ἠρήμωσα ὕδατα καὶ πᾶσαν συναγωγὴν ὕδατος.

²⁴ Because by your messengers you have reviled the Lord, for you said, With the multitude of my chariots I have gone up to the height of the mountains and to the utmost limits of Lebanon, and I cut down the height of its cedar and the beauty of its cypress, and I entered into the height of its forest region, ²⁵and I built a bridge and desolated the waters and every gathering of water.⁷⁴

In contrast to its rendering of v. 24, the text in v. 25 is much shorter than the corresponding verse in the MT. There is no equivalent for the phrase וַיַּחַתֵּי or the motif of the “soles of my foot.” A more exact translation of the verse appears in the versions of Symmachus and Theodotian. For this discussion, what is most intriguing is the translator’s rendering of the verb קָרַח by the phrase ἔθηκα γέφυραν.

Moisés Silva (whose translation is largely followed above) thinks the word γέφυρα can mean either “bridge” or “dam.” While Liddell and Scott’s *Lexicon* allows for both possibilities, the word is most commonly used in the sense of “bridge.”⁷⁵ This should be considered the default meaning of the word unless there are strong indications to the contrary. In the case of a boast of control over water, there is evidence that the construction of a large or unconventional bridge was considered a manifestation of royal power. Herodotus, e.g., records that Xerxes built a bridge across the Hellespont by lining up ships side by side.⁷⁶ Dio

74 The Greek text follows that of Joseph Zeigler, *Isaias* (3d ed., Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983). The English translation follows Moisés Silva, “Esaías,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright; New York: Oxford University, 2007), 852. However, I have not followed Silva in allowing the word γέφυραν the double translation “bridge/dyke.”

75 A study of the first 120 instances of γέφυραν (accusative singular) in classical Greek texts found in the database of the Perseus Digital Library (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>) shows references exclusively to the concept of “bridge.” My thanks to my research assistant, Liam Browne, for producing this data.

76 Herodotus, *Hist.* 7:35–37.

Cassius also records a ship-bridge constructed by Caligula from Puteoli to Bauli; and Trajan is credited with erecting a magnificent stone bridge across the River Ister.⁷⁷

The LXX of Isaiah probably came from the pen of an Alexandrian Jew and is to be dated to about the middle of the 2nd cent. BCE.⁷⁸ Compared to other translations in the LXX, the book of Isaiah is noteworthy for its closer stance towards Greek idiom; evidently, the translator wanted to make the book comprehensible to his Greek readers.⁷⁹ I suggest the translation of Isa 37:25a reflects that concern. As bridge building seems to have been a motif that symbolized royal power and prestige in the Roman world, the LXX translation of Isaiah has interpreted the boast of Sennacherib in terms of a description of royal accomplishments recognizable to his readers.

Attention might also be paid to the translation of the passage in 2 Kgs 19:23–24 in *Tg. Neb.*:

By means of your messengers you have disgraced the people of the Lord, and you said: With the great number of my chariotry I have gone up to overpower their fortresses; and also I will seize the house of their sanctuaries; and I will kill the best of their warriors, the choice of their officials; and I will conquer the city of their power, and I will destroy many of their camps. I was digging wells and drinking foreign waters, and I stamped with the sole of the feet of the people that was with me all the waters of the deep rivers.⁸⁰

The targum provides a somewhat periphrastic but fairly close rendering of v. 24 in the MT. The situation is different with respect to its approach to v. 23 (virtually the same translation for both verses appears in *Tg. Isa.*). The inspiration for the divergence from the letter of the MT in v. 23 arises because of an identification of “Lebanon” with the temple. This linkage appears elsewhere in the targums in connection with both the construction of the first and second temples (e.g., 1 Kgs 5:20; Jer 22:6; Hos 14:8; Hab 2:17; Zech 10:10); a similar association is found in rabbinic literature (e.g., *b. Git.* 56b; *b. Sanh.* 94b).⁸¹

77 Dio Cassius, *Historiae Romanae* 59:17; 68:13.

78 Ronald L. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation: The Strategies of the Translator of Isaiah* (JSup 124; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 25, 35.

79 *Ibid.*, 288.

80 The Aramaic text follows the edition of Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic II: The Former Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 1959); the translation is based on Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, 303.

81 Carol A. Dray, *Translation and Interpretation in the Targum to the Book of Kings* (Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture 5; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 44–47.

Dating the translation of *Tg. Neb.* is difficult. In the case of the former prophets, the only discernible theological framework seems to come from the Amoraic period (3rd–4th cent.) in Babylon, although it undoubtedly built on earlier traditions of translation.⁸² One feature of the targum that identifies the translation of vv. 23–24 with later rabbinic tradition is the equation between the temple and Lebanon. Texts making this association seem to be post 70 CE in origin.⁸³ The plural reference to sanctuaries in v. 23 apparently refers to additional Jewish places of worship besides the temple, presumably synagogues.⁸⁴

In the targumic tradition, therefore, Sennacherib became a cipher for forces ranged not simply against ancient Israel, or even the Second Temple, but the institutions of rabbinic Judaism. This development is of a piece with Jewish exegesis of the period. Sennacherib is portrayed as foe even more terrible in his destructiveness than Pharaoh, but one whose arrogance will finally receive the punishment he deserves.⁸⁵ *Tg. Neb.* highlights the blasphemous nature of his boasts in v. 23 by interpreting the references to Lebanon as a metaphor for Jewish places of worship. By implication, one might also examine the Assyrian king's conquest of waters in v. 24 for blasphemous motifs as well.

5. Theology and Exegesis in the Oracle of Isaiah.

The previous section has pointed out an ongoing interest among the tradents of the Hebrew Bible in reinforcing and updating Isaiah's condemnation of Sennacherib. In its present form, 2 Kgs 18:14–19:37 contains a *mélange* of historical allusions. While based on traditions about Hezekiah's confrontation with the emissaries of Sennacherib, the composer of the version that first appeared in the DtrH painted a tendentious portrait of the Assyrian king. Chronology was altered to emphasize Sennacherib's destructive agenda and his actions were combined with allusions to Neo-Babylonian times (when Jerusalem and its temple were reduced to ruins), as the reference to the devastation of Harran in 2 Kgs 19:12 indicates. An addition to Isaiah's second oracle equated the

82 Paul V. M. Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University, 2011), 199.

83 Dray, *Translation and Interpretation*, 47.

84 Bruce Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenance of the Isaiah Targum* (JSOTSup 23; Sheffield: JSOT, 1982), 18.

85 Bruce Chilton, "Sennacherib: A Synoptic Relationship among Targumim of Isaiah," in *SBL 1986 Seminar Papers* (ed. Kent Richards; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 553.

deeds of Sennacherib with those remembered of Esarhaddon (2 Kgs 19:23–24).

It is not unusual to find cases in which deeds carried out by a particular historical agent are attributed to another in ancient literature. A case in which actions originally done by Sennacherib have been transferred in both time and space can be found in accounts of the destruction of Nineveh related by Hellenistic historians. Their description of the city's demise due to the attackers' diversion of the surrounding river to undermine part of its walls may actually recall Sennacherib's punitive attack on Babylon in 689.⁸⁶ In biblical records, it is probably the case that the conquest of Samaria by Sargon II has been attributed to Shalmaneser V.⁸⁷

But the motivations for mixing memories of the past go beyond the interests of historiography in the case Isaiah's oracle in 2 Kgs 19:23–24. Domination of mountains and water are both characteristics of YHWH's manifestation in the created world (e.g., Isa 42:15; Nahum 1:4–5; Ps 114:3). From this perspective, it is noteworthy that both motifs appear in the self-praise of Assyria's monarch in 2 Kgs 19:23–24. The declaration of Assyrian domination over Lebanon and Egypt can also be viewed as a merismus, one that comprehends the borders of Judah. From both of these viewpoints, the braggadocio of the king of Assyria rings as a counterclaim to Israel's deity. These verses function, therefore, as a reiteration of Sennacherib's challenge to YHWH's sovereignty over His people, which the prophet has branded as blasphemy (cf. 2 Kgs 19:6).

As the references in §1 indicate, one manifestation of kingly rule in the ancient Near East was the management of water. Since YHWH was also conceived as a monarch, it is not surprising that biblical representations portray him as sovereign over water (e.g., Exodus 15; Jonah 2; and Job 38). In this regard, there is probably a *double entendre* in connection with Sennacherib's boasts about conquering Egypt: YHWH also dried up the waters of Egypt in the Exodus event.⁸⁸ 2 Kgs 19:24, therefore, implicitly indicates a dilemma that expressions of royal ideologies posed to early Judaism: to whom did real power belong, to the god of Israel or its foreign overlords? The answer to that question conflated the memories of various monarchs who sought to dominate Jerusalem

86 Cogan, "Nahum," 43.

87 Goldberg, "Two Assyrian Campaigns against Hezekiah," 362–63.

88 Richard Nelson, *First and Second Kings: An Interpretation Commentary* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 1987), 240; Aster, "What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard," 119–20.

and Judah during the literary history of 2 Kings 18–19. Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Nebuchadnezzar II represented types of a common political and theological threat faced through the centuries. The insertion of the passage containing 2 Kgs 19:23–24 and the exegetical treatment of these verses in the LXX and *Tg. Neb.* are eloquent testimony to a continuing desire to reiterate the prophetic viewpoint against the propaganda of human kings, remembered for their claims to control the waters of antiquity.

Manasseh in Paradise? The Influence of ANE Palace Garden Imagery in LXX 2 Chronicles 33:20¹

LOUIS JONKER

1. Introduction

There are numerous biblical texts in which *water* forms a prominent motif. Many biblical authors and compositors thought of water when they were writing or composing their texts in their specific socio-historical contexts. The non-priestly account of creation in Genesis 2, for example, starts with the following setting:

... a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. The name of the first is Pishon; ... The name of the second river is Gihon; ... The name of the third river is Tigris; ... The fourth river is the Euphrates. (Adapted from Gen 2:6–14 NKJV)

Human life starts in a lush and well-watered garden, with all kinds of trees and plants, and with a river running through it. This river splits up in the garden to become four streams which waters the whole world.

This is only one of the many examples in the Hebrew Bible where water forms a prominent motif, and where a fertile garden is closely

1 This paper was first presented at a conference with the theme “Thinking of Water in the Persian Era,” organized by prof. Ehud ben Zvi at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, on 7–11 May 2012. I hereby thank Ehud ben Zvi for the kind invitation to present a paper at this conference. It was also presented in the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah program unit at the SBL Annual meeting which was held in Chicago, IL from 17–20 November 2012. I thank the organizers for accepting my paper into the session, and for the valuable feedback I received there.

related to the theme of water. References to lush orchards and fertile, well-watered gardens in Hebrew Bible literature remind the reader of the ambiguity of these symbols in the ancient Near Eastern physical world where severe drought and adverse climatic conditions characterized some regions, while fertility and an abundance of water supplies were typical of other regions (such as Egypt and Mesopotamia).

My contribution will, however, not focus on all those examples in Hebrew Bible texts, but will rather look more closely at one specific instance where a garden is mentioned, namely in the burial notice of King Manasseh of Judah. This investigation will be done in order to contribute to the wider theme of this volume, namely of how water functioned in the thought world of authors of the Persian era. I will first present a synopsis of the textual data before I will provide an interpretation of the textual variations which can be observed in the different versions. My synthesis at the end of this study will relate the interpretation of a specific reference to garden (LXX 2 Chr 33:20) to the thought-world of the Septuagint translators in order to indicate how the image of a well-watered garden probably influenced their choice of wording.

2. A Synopsis of the Textual Data

Three words are used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to “garden,” namely גן, גנה and פרדס.² Although the lexica do not differentiate significantly between the semantic potential of the former two words, Udo Rütterswörden argues that גן refers to the “Lustgarten oder Park,” i.e., to a garden or park which was intended for enjoyment and pleasure, while גנה can refer to both the “Lustgarten” and the “Nutzgarten,” i.e., a garden which was cultivated for producing fruits, nuts or vegetables.³

2 Stordalen mentions—apart from the three lexemes discussed here—further terms which belong to the semantic field of “garden.” Only one of these, namely ברמל, occurs in Chronicles (2 Chr 26:10) where it denotes a cultivated field. See Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

3 Udo Rütterswörden, “Erwägungen zur alttestamentlichen Paradiesvorstellungen,” *ThLZ* 123/12 (1998): 1153–62 (here 1155). His argument for distinguishing between גן and גנה is not convincing, since he himself indicates that 1 Kgs 21:2—where the reference is specifically to a “Nutzgarten” with the expression גִּירִיק “vegetable garden”—does not fit the pattern: “Das Problem liegt darin, dass hier eigentlich das falsche Wort für den Garten steht, eigentlich müssten wir hier גנה vorfinden, wie in dem schon genannten Nutzgarten des Hoheliedes, und nicht גן” (1160). Stordalen (*Echoes of Eden*, 36) indicates: “Both normally denote cultivated ... fields with trees

The third word, פֶּרֶס, is a Persian loan word which occurs only in three late texts in the Hebrew Bible.⁴ My intention is not to clarify the finer semantic nuances between the Hebrew terms, but rather to provide an indication of the distribution and rendering of these words in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.

Two words are used in Greek to render these Hebrew terms, namely κήπος and παράδεισος. Of the 41 instances of גן in the Hebrew Bible, seventeen are rendered in the LXX with κήπος,⁵ while παράδεισος is used in twenty of the translation instances.⁶ In three further cases some other expressions were used,⁷ while in one case the LXX does not have a parallel text for the Hebrew version.⁸

Of the sixteen cases where גִּנָּה is used, eleven of them are translated with κήπος,⁹ while only three are rendered with παράδεισος.¹⁰ In the remaining two cases other translation options were used.¹¹

All three cases of פֶּרֶס are rendered with παράδεισος.¹²

Three of the cases in the Septuagint attract our attention, because they represent additions *vis-à-vis* the Masoretic text. In two instances, 4 Kgdms 5:26 and Esdras B 13:16 (paralleled in MT 2 Kgs 5:26 and Neh 3:16), the word κήπος had been added to the text. In the former reference the LXX added a reference to “gardens” in the MT version of Elisha’s question to Gehazi: “Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, (LXX + “gardens”), olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants?” (NIV translation). In Esdras B 13:16 a very interesting addition was made to the text attested in MT. Whereas the Hebrew text indicates that Nehemiah repaired the wall of Jerusalem from a point opposite “the tombs of David” (קברי דוד), the LXX indi-

(or vegetables) designed for food produce.” See also the older study Ellen Semple, “Ancient Mediterranean Pleasure Gardens,” *Geographical Review* 19 (1929): 420–43.

4 I.e., Cant 4:13; Eccl 2:5; Neh 2:8. (All concordance searches were done with Logos 4, using the SESB textual version of MT and LXX.)

5 Deut 11:10; 1 Kgs 21:2=3Kgdms 20:2; 2 Kgs 21:18(2X),26; 25:4; Isa 58:11; Jer 52:7; Ezek 36:35; Cant 4:12,15,16(2X); 5:1; 6:2(2X); 8:13.

6 Gen 2:8, 9, 10, 15, 16; 3:1, 2, 3, 8(2X), 10, 23, 24; Isa 51:3; Ezek 28:13; 31:8(2X), 9; Joel 2:3.

7 Jer 31:12 [LXX 38:12] which has ξύλον ἔγκαρπον; Lam 2:6 which has ἄμπελον (=גפן); and Neh 3:15 [LXX Esdras B 13:15] which has τῇ κουρᾷ (probably a confusion with the word גִּן instead of גִּנָּה).

8 Jer 39:4.

9 Isa 1:29; 61:11; 65:3; 66:17; Jer 29:28 (LXX Jer 36:28); Amos 4:9; 9:14; Cant 6:11; Eccl 2:5; Esth 7:7, 8.

10 Num 24:6; Isa 1:30; Jer 29:5 (LXX Jer 36:5).

11 In Job 8:16 it is translated as ὁ ῥάδαμνος (“branch”), and in Esth 1:5 as ἐν αὐλῇ (“in the courtyard”).

12 For textual references, see footnote above.

cates that it was opposite “the garden of the tomb of David” (κήπου τάφου Δαυιδ). The connection of “garden” and “tomb” becomes significant when we consider the third case in the LXX where an addition occurs, namely in 2 Chr 35:20. The next table presents a synoptic comparison of this text with its *Vorlage* in 2 Kings, as well as with its rendering in the Septuagint.

MT 2 Kings 21:18	LXX 4 Kingdoms 21:18
וַיִּשְׁכַּב מְנַשֶּׁה עַם־אַבְתָּיו וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּגִן־בֵּיתוֹ בְּגִן־עֵצָא וַיִּמְלֹךְ אַמּוֹן בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו:	καὶ ἐκοιμήθη Μανασσῆς μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐτάφη ἐν τῷ κήπῳ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ, ἐν κήπῳ Οὐζα, καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν Ἀμων υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἀντ’ αὐτοῦ.
MT 2 Chronicles 33:20	LXX 2 Chronicles 33:20
וַיִּשְׁכַּב מְנַשֶּׁה עַם־אַבְתָּיו וַיִּקְבֹּרְהוּ בֵּיתוֹ וַיִּמְלֹךְ אַמּוֹן בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו:	καὶ ἐκοιμήθη Μανασσῆς μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν ἐν παραδείσῳ οἴκου αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν ἀντ’ αὐτοῦ Ἀμων υἱὸς αὐτοῦ.

When comparing the Chronicles text with its *Vorlage* in 2 Kings 21:18 one prominent change becomes apparent. Whereas the Kings version of Manasseh’s death notice mentions that he was buried “in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza,” the Chronicles version merely mentions that the burial took place “(in) his house.”¹³ In another contribution I have indicated that this change is in line with numerous changes to the royal burial notices which the Chronicler had made.¹⁴ An overview of burial notices shows that the Chronicler used it as tool—together with other literary techniques—to enhance or downplay some of the kings’ profiles.

When the MT 2 Chr 33:20 version of Manasseh’s death notice is compared with the LXX text, another interesting change becomes clear. The LXX translators appended again “in the garden” to the reference “his house” which is present in the MT text. At first glance, it seems that the LXX translators wanted to move back to a version of the text more similar to 2 Kings 21. However, a comparison of the LXX versions of both the Chronicles text and its *Vorlage* shows that the LXX translators of Chronicles went their own way with their addition. We have seen above that 2 Chr 33:20 is the only instance where the word παράδεισος had been appended to the version represented in the MT

13 Klein is of the opinion that b^cgan was omitted by homoieiarcton. See Ralph Klein, 2 *Chronicles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 472.

14 See Louis Jonker, “What do the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ kings have in common? Genre and terminological patterns in the Chronicler’s royal narratives,” *JSem* 21 (2012): 332–65. See also Matthew Suriano, *The Politics of Dead Kings: Dynastic Ancestors in the Book of Kings and Ancient Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

text. Instead of using the word of 2 Kgs 21:18, κήπος, the Chronicles text has παράδεισος. Furthermore, the reference to “the garden of Uzza” was also not taken over.¹⁵

From the textual data this specific text therefore emerges as quite significant in the well-known transformation of the figure of Manasseh through different stages of the tradition. It is general knowledge that the Greek translators of Chronicles worked fairly conservatively, and mostly gave a literal rendering of the Hebrew texts.¹⁶ The variation from κήπος to παράδεισος therefore remains conspicuous.¹⁷ We may now proceed to reflect on the interpretation of this very interesting addition to the LXX text.

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- 15 Interestingly enough, the Peshitta has another version. The Syriac translation also moves back to the text in 2 Kings 21 by adding the words “in the garden of Uzza” again, but differs from both MT 2 Kgs 21:18 and LXX 2 Chr 33:20 by just stating “in his house” (instead of “in the garden of his house”). The Peshitta therefore interestingly supports MT 2 Chr 33:20 in one aspect, but MT 2 Kgs 21:18 in another. I owe thanks to Dr. Gideon Kotzé who pointed out this interesting variation to me.
- 16 See, e.g., the introductory discussion to Chronicles (“1–2 Supplements”) in the NETS translation: Peter Cowe, “1–2 Supplements. To the Reader,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 342–48. Although Knoppers indicates that the other Greek version of parts of Chronicles, namely 1 Esdras, “is written in elegant and idiomatic Greek,” he concedes that “the LXX^b of Chronicles ... is a literal translation, written in nonidiomatic Greek.” See his very good discussion of the textual versions of Chronicles in Gary Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 55–65. See also Pieter Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 8–9; Ralph Klein, *1 Chronicles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 26–30.
- 17 Allen agrees with Gerleman that there is a tendency in LXX Paralipomena to lean towards the vocabulary of the Greek version of the Pentateuch, particularly with reference to liturgical terminology. See Leslie Allen, *The Greek Chronicles: The translator's craft* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 23–26. One could perhaps argue that the occurrence of παράδεισος in LXX 2 Chr 33:20 is in line with this tendency, because all occurrences of גן and גַּן in the Pentateuch (except Deut 11:1) were translated with παράδεισος. However, it is very difficult to determine the LXX translator's technique in Chronicles here, since the Hebrew terms גן and גַּן never occur in MT Chronicles. On account of the variation in the different versions, one could assume, however, that the occurrence in LXX 2 Chr 33:20 is conspicuous and should therefore be investigated further. One could furthermore, argue that the more regular term used for “tomb gardens” in Ptolemaic Alexandria was *kepotaphia* (see discussion below), and the deviation from the term κήπος (which is also used in the synoptic parallel in LXX 4 Kgdms 21:18) is therefore unusual.

3. Manasseh in paradise?

Discussions on this textual variant are almost completely absent in the recent commentaries on Chronicles. Sara Japhet, whose commentary still remains the most recent standard on 2 Chronicles, has the following on 2 Chronicles 33:20:

Manasseh's burial place is described in II Kings 21.18 with a double designation: 'in the garden of **his** house, in the garden of Uzza.' The second part was omitted in Chronicles, and the first then corrupted by the omission of *began*. Although the precise relationship between "the tombs of the kings" in 'the city of David' and the house garden is not clear, it seems that in this matter also Manasseh introduced a new practice, deviating from all his predecessors. According to the conventional notes of Kings, all the kings of Judah up to Ahaz were buried in 'the city of David' ... For whatever reason, the note on Hezekiah's burial is absent from the Deuteronomistic conclusion (II Kings 20.21), but is supplemented in II Chron. 32.33. Of the kings following Hezekiah, their burial place is indicated only for three – Manasseh, Amon and Josiah – with different designations: 'in the garden of Uzza' for the first two, 'in his own tomb' for Josiah (II Kings 23.30). The systematic difference in the Deuteronomistic comments certainly assumes that Manasseh provided for a new burial place, which was to become the royal tombs from this point onward.¹⁸

Japhet rightly indicates that the Chronicler modified the burial notices in order to give expression to his own perspective on a particular king. However, she does also not attend to the LXX version of the Chronicles text.

Some studies link the use of the word *παράδεισος* in the Manasseh narrative to the very prominent usage of the same word in LXX Genesis 2–3 where the Garden of Eden is called *παράδεισος*.¹⁹ Within the Christian tradition this choice of word by the LXX led to a cosmic understanding of the Garden of Eden, or alternatively to all kinds of eschatological interpretations thereof. An eschatological understanding of the term had particularly been instigated by the New Testament text in Luke 23:43 where the gospel writer reports Jesus' words on the cross directed to the person crucified next to him: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (NRSV). The same Greek word,

18 Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 1012.

19 See again footnote 16 above. Rütterswörden, "Paradiesvorstellung," 1154 criticizes those studies which see *παράδεισος* as translation of the phrase "Garden of Eden." He indicates that *παράδεισος* only translates the word "Garden," and that the Greek version rather reads "*παράδεισος* of Eden."

παράδεισος, is used here, as one of only three instances in the New Testament.²⁰

There might be two reasons why an eschatological, or even apocalyptic interpretation of the Septuagint's version of Manasseh's burial place could be considered: Firstly, if we assume that the Septuagint translation of Chronicles was made sometime during the second century BCE, one may want to investigate the influence of contemporary movements in early Judaism towards eschatology and apocalypticism that are witnessed in literature from that time.²¹ Secondly, some earlier scholars have suggested an eschatological, and even Messianic, interpretation for the Chronicles as a whole. These studies concentrated, however, on the future expectation of a Davidic kingdom (on account of the Chronicler's presentation of the Judahite kings), or on the hope of a future restoration of an all-inclusive Israel (on account of the genealogical portrayal and prominence of כל-ישראל in Chronicles).²² In light of these interpretations one may want to investigate whether that trend had any further development in the later versions such as the Septuagint.

However, I would be inclined to rather suggest other contexts which, in my opinion, would deliver a more fruitful interpretation of the texts. These contexts are Egyptian tomb garden imagery, as well as Persian imagery of the royal garden.

20 See 2 Cor 12:4 and Rev 2:7, the other two instances where the word παράδεισος is used in the NT.

21 For a good overview of eschatological and apocalyptic developments in biblical and extra-biblical literature, see John Collins, "Eschatology" in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (ed. John Collins and Daniel Harlow; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 594–97.

22 For good overviews of eschatological interpretations of Chronicles, see Hugh Williamson, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 162–195; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 48; Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 384–393. See also Seth Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2011) who draws parallels between Genesis 1–3 and Chronicles on account of the fact that Chronicles apparently was composed to close the canon. He also sees parallel relationships between Chronicles and Revelation which both close the major canonical units.

4. Gardens in the Ancient Near East

4.1 Egypt as background?

When working with the LXX translations of Kings and Chronicles which most probably had their origin in Egypt,²³ it might be rewarding to look at this context for images of gardens and gardening. Maureen Carroll, in her book on ancient gardens in history and archaeology, mentions that

[i]n Egypt ... the garden not only played an important role in the agrarian economy supplying the population with numerous essential products, but it was also associated with luxury and leisure as well as divine blessing. Just as the Egyptians imagined the gods to inhabit the gardens and groves of their temples, so the pharaohs, as the divine rulers on earth, enjoyed extensive gardens in and around their palaces. In the next – and better – life, ancient Egyptians hoped to partake of the pleasures and shaded peace of gardens ...²⁴

Although Carroll admits that it is often hard to distinguish “between the buildings erected to the cult of the gods and those dedicated to the cult of the king”²⁵—and therefore also between sacred and palace gardens—she distinguishes in different chapters of her book between so-called “sacred gardens” (ch. 4) and “gardens of the dead” (ch. 5). It is particularly the last-mentioned which interests us, because the text under discussion in 2 Chr 33:20 also relates a garden to a burial place.

Carroll mentions that

[a]ctual gardens at Egyptian tombs would have been difficult and costly to maintain if they were not along the banks of the Nile or in the delta region, where they could be easily fertilized and watered. ... Tombs with gardens,

23 Leslie Allen discusses Gerleman’s arguments in favour of an Egyptian provenance for the Greek translation of Chronicles. Allen comes to the following conclusion: “All this evidence of links with Egypt, and often with Ptolemaic Egypt, has a strong cumulative effect. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Par is a pre-Christian Egyptian creation, probably of second century origin” (*The Greek Chronicles*, 23).

24 Maureen Carroll, *Earthly Paradises: Ancient Gardens in History and Archaeology* (London: The British Museum Press, 2003), 8. See also Louise Gallery, “The Garden of Ancient Egypt,” in *Immortal Egypt* (ed. Denise Schmandt-Besserat; Malibu: Undena Publications, 1978), 43–49; Marie Moens, “The Ancient Egyptian Garden in the New Kingdom. A Study of Representations,” *OLP* 15 (1984): 11–53; Jean-Claude Hugonot, *Le Jardin dans l’Égypte ancienne* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989); Alix Wilkinson, “Symbolism and Design in Ancient Egyptian Gardens,” *Garden History* 22 (1994): 1–17; idem, *The Garden in Ancient Egypt* (London: The Rubicon Press, 1998); John Bellinger, *Ancient Egyptian Gardens* (Sheffield: Amarna, 2008).

25 Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 60.

groves and irrigation, particularly in the desert, would have remained a luxury that only the wealthy and the powerful could afford.²⁶

However, gardens are prominent motifs in Egyptian tomb inscriptions and paintings.²⁷ According to Carroll these

[i]nscriptions and paintings in Egyptian tombs clearly show that the deceased hoped to return to earth to be able to enjoy his possessions, and these included, above all, the garden. It was a refreshing and well-watered garden, a garden that could flourish on its own and without any human effort. The mortal Egyptian left this world and entered the other world of eternal happiness, a world characterized as a garden paradise.²⁸

Carroll therefore interprets the depiction of the ideal garden in Egyptian tombs (also through wooden models of houses and gardens) as “a kind of ‘magical formula’ designed to fulfil the wish of the deceased.”²⁹

Archaeological evidence shows that Egyptian tombs were painted with garden scenes as late as the Roman period. One significant example is a tomb in the cemetery of Wardian outside Alexandria. This tomb is painted with a scene of palms and other trees, and with oxen that pull a waterwheel.

Mention is also made in some Greek papyri of the first century BCE of gardens planted in the cemeteries of Ptolemaic Alexandria. These are called *kepotaphia* in Greek, that is “tomb gardens.” These *kepotaphia* were apparently leased for a certain period of time and at a price, so that the profit could be used for the upkeep of the gardens.³⁰

The temporal and geographical proximity of these examples from Egypt makes it tempting to take this as background of the textual peculiarity that we are studying in the LXX Manasseh account. This background could have influenced the LXX translators to supply the information on the garden again, in order to show that there was some sort of an afterlife for this king. In this way the mentioning of the garden

26 Ibid., 72.

27 Bellinger, *Ancient Egyptian Gardens*, 13–30.

28 Carroll, *Earthly Paradises*, 72.

29 Ibid. See also Izak Cornelius, “The Garden in the Iconography of the Ancient Near East: A Study of selected material from Egypt,” *JSem* 1 (1989): 204–28. He summarizes his findings as follows: “The garden with its ordered elements also had a more ‘symbolic’ meaning attached to it – it represented the circle of life The different contexts, attested in the artistic record, substantiate the meaning of life. The garden in the private house and palace represented the power of life, the temple garden represented the divine forces of life at work in the cosmos and the necropolis garden represented the recurring rebirth of life – related to the freedom of movement of the soul (Egyptian *ba*) in the hereafter” (226).

30 Ibid., 74–75.

tomb in LXX 2 Chr 33:20 could have been—under the influence of the Egyptian context—an indication that the LXX translators envisaged some sort of an afterlife for Manasseh, and thereby contributed to a more positive portrayal of the king than in the Hebrew *Vorlage*. However, while the term *kepotaphia* was the more usual term used for tomb gardens in Alexandria, one would have expected that the word κήπος would have been used by the translators. The use of the word παράδεισος in this text therefore leads us to also investigate another possible background to this text, namely the Persian gardens.

4.2 Achaemenid Persian gardens as background?

“[G]ardens were an integral part of Persian culture.”³¹ With this statement the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* proclaims the architectural significance and prominence of well-watered gardens in Achaemenid Persia. It is indicated there that “[w]hat made gardens special during the Achaemenid reign was that for the first time the garden became not only an integral part of the architecture, but was also the focus of it.”³² What is important for our interpretation of the Chronicles texts is that gardens during the Achaemenid period were much more than merely horticultural “Nutzgärten” (to use Rüterswörden’s term here):

Aside from the practical aspects of the garden and its sensual pleasures, royal gardens also incorporated political, philosophical, and religious symbolism. The idea of the king creating a fertile garden out of barren land, bringing symmetry and order out of chaos, and duplicating the divine paradise on earth, constituted a powerful statement symbolizing authority, fertility, and legitimacy ...³³

David Stronach (followed by Rüterswörden) rightly indicates, however, that the well-watered garden was not a novel invention by the Persians, but was already represented in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian times.³⁴ Stronach makes the claim that

31 “Garden: i. Achaemenid Period” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (online version: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/garden-i>; accessed on 20 April 2012).

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 See David Stronach, “The Garden as a Political Statement: Some Case Studies from the Near East in the First Millennium B.C.,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 4 (1990): 171–80. See also the following studies: Leo Oppenheim, “On Royal Gardens in Mesopotamia,” *JNES* 24 (1965): 328–33; Donald Wiseman, “Mesopotamian Gardens,” *Anatolian Studies* 33 (1983): 137–44; Stephanie Dalley, “Ancient Mesopotamian Gardens

[f]rom the sixth millennium BC onwards, when irrigation agriculture first began to be adopted in the largely arid setting of central and southern Mesopotamia, it can be assumed that the garden came to epitomize the fertility of the land. From the outset, moreover, such a choice amenity — abundantly watered, fruitful, shaded and cool — must also have emerged as a unique source of pleasure and delight.³⁵

Stronach indicates, however, that the *royal* garden only started becoming prominent in Mesopotamia from the 9th century BCE onwards. He indicates that Assurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE), the founder of the Neo-Assyrian empire, was one of the first monarchs to view the garden as “a potent vehicle for royal propaganda.”³⁶ Assurnasirpal took pains to record all the exotic trees and plants which he had retrieved in his campaigns, and which he then had planted in his new garden at Nimrud. The garden, with all the plants captured in his campaigns, therefore became a symbol of his military power and influence. Stronach indicates that the garden probably emphasized another aspect of the monarch’s public persona, namely “his cosmic role in assuring the fertility and fruitfulness of the land as a whole.”³⁷

Sargon II (722–705 BCE) took the significance of the garden one step further in his construction of his new capital at Khorsabad. Stronach indicates that “[w]ith the reign of Sargon II ..., Assyrian rulers can be seen to move unquestionably to something beyond a generous provision of water and an apparent ambition to plant the largest possible range of botanical specimens.”³⁸ Not only did Sargon boast in an inscription which celebrates the city’s foundation that he had “a park like unto Mount Amanus,” and that herein stood “every tree of the Hittite land,”³⁹ but a bas-relief found in a private wing of Sargon’s palace shows a park-like landscape with architectural elements with strong Syrian, and probably also Anatolian, motifs. If this artistic depiction is in any way a reflection of Sargon’s garden at Khorsabad, it seems that the Assyrian king wanted to give visual expression back home to his

and the Identification of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon Resolved,” *Garden History* 21 (1993): 1–13; Julian Reade, “Alexander the Great and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon,” *Iraq* 62 (2000): 195–217.

35 Ibid., 171.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 172.

38 Ibid.

39 Stronach quotes from Luckenbill’s English translation published in *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. See Ibid., 179 n. 11. Stronach furthermore indicates that “the term ‘Hittite’ can almost certainly be taken to refer to the region of north Syria” in the context of the first millennium BCE. See Ibid., 179 n. 12.

influence to the west. The symbolism of the garden again goes beyond the attestation of fertility and fruitfulness.

When Sennacherib (704–681 BCE), Sargon's son, relocated his capital to Nineveh, he replicated his father's garden at his new palace. This royal park is depicted in a famous mid-seventh century BCE relief from Assurbanipal's palace. Although some of the Syrian elements of his father's garden are still visible, this garden also shows off the unexcelled engineering achievements of the time in the form of a stone aquaduct and some water channels. Stronach remarks the following about this depiction:

Whether or not Sennacherib ... went so far as to construct stone water channels and basins within his gardens is not known. Such channels would obviously not have been suitable on the steep slopes of a wooded hillock ..., but such conduits could have been introduced on more level ground. At all events, it is worth noting that Sennacherib's labor force possessed the necessary skills to construct permanent stone conduits.⁴⁰

The royal garden in Nineveh, or, at least its depiction in the Assurbanipal relief, maintains those elements which emphasize the king's influence to the west, but also shows off the engineering expertise which the king had at his disposal.

The Neo-Babylonian contribution to the development of the royal garden comes from the time of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE) of Babylon. He was, according to Stronach, "[a] soldier and statesman of marked ability," but "in addition a royal architect of unusual ambition and imagination."⁴¹ According to Berossus he built some mountainous surroundings in his palace garden to please his Median consort, and in doing so "continued to look to a broad category of garden design which had come to represent, for at least a century before his accession, a prime expression of wealth and power."⁴² Stronach therefore sees "the Hanging Gardens of Babylon ... as an ultimate witness to the prestige that was attached to the concept of a 'landscaped' royal garden during the first half of the first millennium BC."⁴³

During Persian rule the royal garden came to its fullest expression. It is well-known that not only the tomb of Cyrus the Great (559–530 BCE) at Pasargadae was situated in a luxuriant garden, but that the adjacent palaces of Cyrus were themselves located "amidst a series of

40 Ibid., 174.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

contiguous garden spaces."⁴⁴ Cyrus chose a site in Persia to erect his new capital. Pasargadae was situated at a height of about 1900m in the Zagros Mountains on a plain which was watered by the Pulvar River. Archaeology has confirmed what classical writers witnessed about in their writings, for example, that Cyrus' tomb was located "in the royal park; a grove had been planted round it with all sorts of trees and irrigated, and deep grass had grown in the meadow."⁴⁵ According to Briant "[t]he excavations carried out on the site have shown that this is true of all the buildings of Pasargadae, which all opened on gardens. ... There can be no doubt that the original plans for these gardens go back to the time of Cyrus, even if they were completed in the time of Darius and scrupulously maintained during the entire Achaemenid period."⁴⁶ Amélie Kuhrt indicates that

[p]lants gathered from all over the empire were planted in carefully planned gardens. Sections of the parks were laid out as lush woodlands, well supplied with water, forming orderly and fertile oases in the midst of barren landscapes. These forested sections also served as game reserves, stocked with wild animals (lions, tigers, bears), where kings and courtiers hunted, allowing the former to exhibit his physical prowess.⁴⁷

It is therefore no wonder that "[f]rom the time of the Achaemenid empire the idea of an earthly paradise spread to the literature and languages of other cultures."⁴⁸ It is well-known that the English word "paradise" and French word "paradis" find their etymology in the Avestan word *pairidaeza-*, the Old Persian word *paridaida-*, and Median word *paridaiza-* which were transliterated into Greek as *paradeisos* and rendered into the Latin *paradisus*.⁴⁹

One of the most striking features of the paradises at Pasargadae was the fact that some of these gardens were integrated into the palace spaces.⁵⁰ Briant indicates that "[t]he[se] paradises, integrated into the

44 Ibid. See also Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (trans. Peter Daniels; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 85–86; Josef Wiesehöfer, *Die antike Persien* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 2005), 49–50.

45 Aristobulus, quoted from Ibid., 86.

46 Ibid.

47 Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London: Routledge, 2010 [Paperback]), 472.

48 "Garden: i. Achaemenid Period" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

49 Ibid. See also Wiesehöfer, *Persien*, 113.

50 For an elaborate discussion on the architectural layout and features of the so-called Palace P in Pasargadae, see Dietrich Huff, "Überlegungen zu Funktion, Genese und Nachfolge des Apadana," in *Der Achämenidenhof / The Achaemenid Court* (ed. Bruno Jacobs and Robert Rollinger; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 337–47.

Achaemenid palace space, were always considered one of the most striking external manifestations of Persian wealth and luxury by the Greek authors."⁵¹ According to Stronach the innermost garden of the palace area in Pasargadae was "defined by stone-lined water channels" and by another palace and pavilions that were situated according to a well-ordered plan. Archaeology has brought to light that stone water channels and basins defined the outline of two contiguous rectangular garden plots and the limits of a broad pathway that once bordered the central space.⁵² The white limestone lined water channels connected square basins or pools that were placed at regular intervals:

These water courses or aqueducts formed the principle and secondary axes of the quadripartite layout and are the earliest known record of gravity-fed water rills cascading into regularly paced basins arranged in a geometric system. The channels and basins served both a practical irrigation function and an aesthetic function. Besides, they also modified the climate of the immediate surroundings.⁵³

The inner plot was divided into four separate plots – "each wholly in consonance with the proportions of the garden as a whole"⁵⁴ – a configuration which was fundamental in later Persian garden design, namely that of the so-called *chahar bagh* or "fourfold garden."⁵⁵

There is speculation in the literature about what this fourfold layout symbolized. Stronach speculates as follows:

Was such a plan no more than an expression of the new, geometrical articulation that is manifest at Pasargadae? Or no more than a demonstration of the constant Achaemenid delight in paired or balanced elements? Or was it perhaps intended to spell out some more specific, political message? Might such a quadripartite garden plan have been intended, at least in one sense, to stand for *all* the Achaemenid dominions—and for the fertility that was expected of each part of the monarch's 'estate'? Or, to phrase the question in yet another way, were the four plots of Cyrus' stone-channelled garden designed to represent 'the four quarters of the world'? Needless to say such a concept would have been instantly familiar to many of the tribu-

51 Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 86.

52 See Stronach, "The Garden," 176 and K. E. Eduljee, "Persian Gardens, Chahar Bagh, Pairidaeza, Baghs" (accessed online at: <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/garden/index.htm#overview>; accessed on 20 April 2012).

53 Ibid.

54 Stronach, "The Garden," 176.

55 Ibid.

tary peoples of the empire—and by no means unfamiliar to the Persians themselves.⁵⁶

Stronach concedes that these symbolic overtones might have been intended with the layout of the paradises in Pasargadae. However, he is rather convinced that Cyrus “followed prior Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian practice in exploring the political messages that could be conveyed through the medium of royal garden architecture.”⁵⁷ Two aspects of this presumed political function of the paradises in Cyrus’ capital are underlined by Stronach:

First, Cyrus’ wish to underline the distance of his capital from any hostile boundary may have been one of a number of factors that led him, quite exceptionally, to place his palaces in the undefended setting of a series of gently sloping gardens; and secondly, Cyrus’ evident desire to make optimal and very visible use of the new standards of stone working that were available to him following his conquest of Lydia may have been one of the chief factors which inspired the novel introduction of finely dressed stone water channels and basins.⁵⁸

Stronach’s first point reminds of the so-called *Pax Achaemenidica*, an aspect of Achaemenid royal ideology which is strongly emphasized by Josef Wiesehöfer.⁵⁹ The royal palaces, situated in the serene environment of well-watered and well-ordered paradises, could have been a visible expression of the royal ideology of peace which is also given expression in the Cyrus Cylinder and the relief scenes of the Apadana in Persepolis.⁶⁰

Cyrus’ design of a garden capital in Pasargadae had many echoes in subsequent palatial and capital construction in later Persian times. Stronach indicates that

56 Ibid. Stronach (179 n. 34) mentions that “[t]he trilingual texts that were recovered from the foundation deposits of the Apadana at Persepolis can be understood to define the Achaemenid empire as a four-cornered entity.”

57 Ibid., 176.

58 Ibid.

59 See particularly Josef Wiesehöfer, “From Achaemenid Imperial Order to Sasanian Diplomacy: War, Peace, and Reconciliation in Pre-Islamic Iran,” in *War and Peace in the Ancient World* (ed. Kurt Raaflaub; London: Blackwell, 2007), 124–27; idem, “The Achaemenid Empire in the Fourth Century B.C.E.: A Period of Decline?” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century BCE* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary Knoppers, and Rainier Albertz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 11–30.

60 See my description of the Cyrus Cylinder in Louis Jonker “Human Dignity and the Construction of Identity in the Old Testament,” *Scriptura* 105 (2010): 594–607. See also Wiesehöfer’s interpretation of the relief scenes on the outside steps of the Apadana in Persepolis in Wiesehöfer, “Achaemenid Imperial Order,” 126.

[t]he degree to which the principal characteristics of the Achaemenid palatial garden where [*sic!*] then subsequently preserved—at least in Iran—for many centuries following the fall of Persepolis in 331 BC is something which cannot only be attributed to the undeniable simplicity and elegance of Cyrus' seminal design. It must also be explained, needless to say, by the wish of many a later ruler to be associated with a once universally recognised and prestigious emblem of kingship.⁶¹

It is therefore no wonder that the Achaemenid kings were known among the classical writers as good gardeners. One of the well-known examples is the discussion between Socrates and Critobulus in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (from 399 BCE) about the fact that the Persian kings excelled in gardening, a report which goes back on the Spartan general Lysander who joined the later Achaemenid king, Cyrus the Younger, as a mercenary in 401 BCE. Xenophon has Socrates saying in this text:

'What is more,' said Socrates, 'wherever he [a reference to Cyrus the Younger – LCJ] dwells and wherever he goes, he is concerned that there should be gardens, which are called *paradeisoi*, full of all the beautiful and fine plants that grow on earth. And he spends most of his time in them, unless the time of year prevents it.' 'Good heavens, Socrates,' said Critobulus, 'then the king, who himself stays in them, must ensure that the *paradeisoi* are equipped as beautifully as possible with trees and all the other lovely things the earth produces.'⁶²

From this quote it becomes clear that the reputation of the Persian kings as gardeners – and the symbolism of the royal Persian gardens – were well-known in the Greek world from the fourth century BCE onwards.⁶³ Eduljee even remarks that the word *paradeisoi* used by Xenophon provided the term to the Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible: "Xenophon transcribed the Persian *pairidaeza* to his Greek form of *paradeisos*, the term that would later be used for the Garden of Eden in the Greek translations of the Christian Bible."⁶⁴ I understand this refer-

61 Stronach, "The Garden," 176–77.

62 Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 4.13, quoted from Amélie Kuhrt's translation in Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire*, Text 21 (i), 501.

63 One may assume that the influence of Persian garden design and imagery already spread to other parts of the world before the Greek influence. With Cambyses' invasion of Egypt at the end of the sixth century BCE that influence probably came over to Egypt. We also have archaeological witness in Ramat Rahel that the Persian garden was not unknown in Judah during the 5th–4th centuries BCE. See Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot, and Dafna Langgut, "The Riddle of Ramat Rahel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Period Edifice," *Transeuphratene* 41 (2012): 57–79.

64 Eduljee, "Persian Gardens."

ence to “Christian Bible” as a reference to the Septuagint which formed the basis for the Christian Old Testament for many centuries.

These facts form the basis of the interpretation of the LXX addition in 2 Chronicles 33:20 which will be suggested in the next section.

5. Synthesis and Conclusion

It is generally acknowledged in Chronicles commentaries that the Chronicler’s version of the Manasseh narrative, with its inclusion of references to the prayer and repentance of Manasseh, was an attempt to reconcile the Deuteronomist’s narrative with the fact that Manasseh was the longest-reigning king in Judah’s history.⁶⁵ It simply would not have made sense for the later historian that a king who reigned 55 years be portrayed as the epitome of failure. The Chronicler therefore augmented the Deuteronomist’s version with references to Manasseh’s prayer and repentance (2 Chr 33:14–17) which probably relied on existing traditions of the time (as will be discussed below). The change to the burial notice, which is in line with the general trend in Chronicles, corroborated these additions.

My theory is then that the Septuagint translators took this “upgrading” of Manasseh, which already had taken place in the MT Chronicler’s version, one step further by adding the word *παράδεισος* to the burial notice. In doing so, the Septuagint translators could claim to have restored the text towards the Deuteronomist’s version again. But the reference to *παράδεισος* most probably was an attempt to provide an “afterlife” for the king (according to the Egyptian tomb imagery, as indicated above), and/or was an attempt to equate Manasseh with the Persian kings (according to the Persian imagery). Against the background of the significance of the Persian royal garden the suggestion of the LXX reading would be that Manasseh was similar to the later Persian emperors who had great influence and power, and who had the ability to bring fertility and order to the land. But the insertion in the LXX translation (which was made in Ptolemaic Alexandria in the second century BCE) could also have invoked in that context the Egyptian garden tombs as symbols of a good afterlife which was bestowed on the Egyptian royalty.

65 See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1003–4; Steven McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 357–58; Stephen Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 2001), 233; Mark Boda, *1–2 Chronicles* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2010), 406.

The fact that *παράδεισος* was added, but that the appositional reference to “the garden of Uzza” was not inserted again (unlike the Peshitta version), could maybe also be explained in terms of the “upgrading” of Manasseh. If Becking and other scholars are correct that “Uzza” was a reference to a Nabatean goddess who was associated in some contexts with Isis, it is understandable that the LXX translators did not include this reference which would put the blemish of idolatry on Manasseh again.⁶⁶

In these ways the image of the longest-reigning king of Judah was upgraded in the LXX even more than in the MT Chronicles version. This further “upgrading” of Manasseh would have been in line with one of the Pseudepigrapha which probably originated more or less contemporaneously with the Septuagint translation of Chronicles, namely the well-known Prayer of Manasseh.⁶⁷ There is general agreement among scholars that this Greek pseudepigraphon was a creation of the second or first century BCE which was most probably influenced by the Chronicler’s version in the Hebrew Bible where a prayer of Ma-

66 See Bob Becking, “The Enigmatic Garden of Uzzah: A Religio-Historical Footnote to 2 Kings 21:18,26,” in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt; Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Ingo Kottsieper, Rüdiger Schmitt, and Jakob Wöhrle; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 383–91. Becking revisits John Gray’s proposal that the “garden of Uzza” referred to an enclosure which was associated with the cult of a deity. On account of recently discovered inscriptions Becking comes to the following conclusion: “The evidence from the recently published inscriptions makes the assumption of John Gray more plausible. As counter-argument, one could say that the presence of the veneration of Uzzah in Southern Judaeen and Edomite territory in the fourth century BCE can be explained by the fact that she was a North Arabian goddess and that hence her presence is due to cultural influences from the Arabian peninsula. Against this objection, I would like to refer to the astral character of Uzzah. The reigns of Manasseh and Amon in the first half of the seventh century BCE coincide with a process of astralisation of the religion of Judah. The veneration of Uzzah as an astral body would perfectly fit in the pattern of that process.” See also Francesca Stavrakopoulou, “Exploring the Garden of Uzzah. Death, Burial and Ideologies of Kingship,” *Bib* 87 (2006): 1–21, as well as the discussion in Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 486.

67 See James Davila, “Is the Prayer of Manasseh a Jewish Work?” in *Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism* (ed. Lynn LiDonnici and Andrea Lieber; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 75–85; Winnefred Hulbert, “Good King and Bad King: Traditions about Manasseh in the Bible and Late Second Temple Judaism,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 11 (2008): 71–81. See also my discussions in Louis Jonker, “Tradition through Reading – Reading the Tradition: Reflections on Eep Talstra’s Exegetical Methodology,” in *Tradition and Innovation in Biblical Interpretation: Studies Presented to Professor Eep Talstra on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. Wido van Peursen and Janet Dyk; Leiden: Brill, 2011): 133–51; idem, “‘Lewend en kragtig? Die hermeneutiese dinamika en implikasies van (her)interpretasie in die Ou Testament,’” *NGTT* 52 (2011): 128–47.

nasseh is mentioned.⁶⁸ I do not argue here that the Greek Prayer of Manasseh in any way had direct influence on the Septuagint's version. However, the Prayer is a clear indication that the more positive tradition about Manasseh persisted well into the Greco-Roman period.

Was Manasseh in paradise? My answer to this question would be no and yes. I do not think that the LXX version of 2 Chronicles 33:20 wanted to suggest that Manasseh was in an eschatological paradise because of his repentance and forgiveness by Yahweh. One might consider whether the Septuagint translators deliberately used the term *παράδεισος* in order to link Manasseh to the Genesis 2–3 account of the Garden of Eden. However, even if this may be so, it would not necessitate an eschatological interpretation.

I would, however, be inclined to admit that Manasseh was put in paradise by the Septuagint translators, but then in the Persian paradise or Egyptian tomb garden. In the imagery of the garden it becomes clear that the control of water, and the ordering of water resources for the irrigation and fertilization of the vegetation surrounding the royal palace or tomb, was closely related to royal power and influence (in Persia), or even a serene afterlife (in Egypt). A study of gardens in Egypt and Persia allows us to see that the LXX translators probably wanted to upgrade the image of Manasseh even beyond the level of the Chronicler's version. Manasseh, buried in the paradise of his home, was a king of equal reputation, power and influence than the Persian emperors, and had a similar afterlife than the Egyptian royalty.

This study therefore confirms the importance of exploring the different manifestations of the thought-world pertaining to water in the ancient Near East. Thinking of water in the ancient Persian and Egyptian worlds, and associating the control of water with lush and well-ordered gardens, formed the background against which a colourful tapestry of (mainly royal) associations could be woven.

68 Although the majority view goes in the direction of a Jewish origin for this Prayer, Davila recently came to the following conclusion in his investigation: "... I propose that our primary working hypothesis should be that it is a Christian work that gives us some early and interesting evidence about ideas that some ancient Christians accepted about repentance in the Old Testament dispensation. This much we know to be true from its transmission history. But Jewish authorship remains a real possibility so, although the data in it should not be used to reconstruct aspects of ancient Judaism which are otherwise unsupported by verifiably Jewish sources, one may reasonably use the Prayer of Manasseh as ancillary evidence for aspects of ancient Judaism found elsewhere in sources already established beyond reasonable doubt to be Jewish" (Davila, "Prayer of Manasseh," 85).

Dew in the Enochic Literature

PETER JUHÁS¹

By “Enochic literature” in this paper is meant the Ethiopic text of 1 Enoch, a literary work which, in view of its diachronic aspects and composite nature, can well be regarded as a separate literary corpus.² Since a century ago, its five separate parts have been identified: the Book of the Watchers (1–36), the Similitudes (37–71), the Astronomical Book (72–82), the Book of Dreams (83–90), and the Epistle of Enoch (91–108), within which the Apocalypse of Weeks is a distinct unit (93:1–10; 91:11–17).³ There is no fragment of the Similitudes preserved in the Qumran scrolls. In its place, the Book of Giants was copied, so Milik argued that five books forming 1 Enoch constituted an Enochic Pentateuch, a counterpart to the Mosaic Pentateuch.⁴ However, this hypothesis has been criticized and failed to find much support in the discussion.⁵ As the earliest manuscript of the Astronomical Book is dated to the end of the 3rd or beginning of the 2nd century and the oldest fragments of the Book of the Watchers to the 1st half of the 2nd century (taking into account some diachronic aspects of the latter Book), “it is probable that both these works were extant in some form already in the third century B.C.E.”⁶ The Epistle, which was composed in the 2nd century BCE, “is an explicit appeal for the righteous to stand fast as they wait for the judgment.”⁷ The latest part of 1 Enoch, dating probably

1 I would like to thank Prof. Ehud Ben Zvi and Prof. Hermann-Josef Stipp for the opportunity to join the workshop in Edmonton. Prof. Otfried Hofius was kind to read the first draft of this paper and Prof. Rodrigo Morales to check its English. I express my gratitude to them.

2 The Second Enoch (2 En.) deserves another paper on the topic of water or dew.

3 For the introduction matters see John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 43–84, 177–93; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 1–125.

4 See Józef T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 58, 77–78, 183–184. See also Gregory H. Dix, “The Enochic Pentateuch,” *JTS* 27 (1925–1926): 29–42.

5 See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 22.

6 Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 44.

7 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 8.

from the late first century BCE or to the early first century CE, are the Similitudes. Beside some motifs shared with the older parts, the major and unique component is “a series of heavenly tableaux that portray the judgment,” over which a heavenly figure (known as Righteous One, Son of Man etc.) is presiding.⁸

Water in its various states occurs in diverse contexts and is used in distinct ways. Three main uses can be discerned:

1. Cosmological speculations (exemplified below in the example of dew)
2. “Historical” settings (referring mostly to the flood)
3. Comparisons (e.g., to express evanescence, to describe tears, etc.)

1. The Astronomical Book and the Book of the Watchers

It seems methodologically advisable to begin with the most ancient parts of 1 Enoch, i.e., the Astronomical Book and the Book of the Watchers, in order to show how they were (or not) taken up and modified in the later works.

First Enoch 75:5, in which the winds and the spirit of the dew are associated together, could be regarded as the first relevant occurrence of dew. However, this verse shows some textual problems with regard to its content. In addition to some syntactical problems, the winds and the spirit of the dew are out of place, because the context clearly speaks about gates for the sun and other lights of heaven rather than for the winds. Since the work of Dillmann, this verse has been regarded as a gloss.⁹

The proper context of the gates for the winds and the different states of water is chapter 76. Neugebauer observes:

“The Ethiopian rose of winds consists of a sequence of twelve openings, again called ‘gates,’ which encircle the whole horizon. The winds from the four cardinal directions are supposed to be beneficial, in contrast to the winds from the remaining eight gates that bring discomfort and devastation [...].”¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁹ See the bibliography in George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 465, n. 7; see also Siegbert Uhlig, “Das äthiopische Henochbuch,” in *Jüdische Schriften aus der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit* (ed. Hermann Lichtenberger et al.; 6 vols.; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1984), 5:652, n. b and d.

¹⁰ Otto E. Neugebauer, *The ‘Astronomical’ Chapters of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch (72–82)* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1981), 23. For graphic figure see *ibid.* and Uhlig, “Das

The positive function of the winds is characterized as “for the healing of the earth and its revitalization” in the Aramaic (רפֿי־הָאָרֶץ וְלִאֲחִיּוּתָהּ) 4Q210 1 II, 2),¹¹ while in the Ethiopic they are called “winds of blessing and peace” (ነፋሳተ:በረከት:ወሰላም; 76:4).¹² As expected, “dew” (ጠል) comes together with “rain” (ዝናም), “peace/prosperity” (ሰላም) and then “life” (አይወት; South¹³ and North) or “fruitfulness” (ፍሬ; East) or “blessing” (በረከት; West). Including dew as one of the beneficial aspects of the winds is not surprising. For anyone who has experienced this meteorological phenomenon during the Palestinian summer¹⁴ it is naturally understandable why it is perceived as a gift of YHWH and consequently applied in different blessings (e.g., Gen 27; Deut 33:13; see below for the apocalyptic works).

The most perplexing fact is that rain and dew are combined with the maleficent aspects of the winds. VanderKam suggests:

“Perhaps some confusion entered the textual tradition and marred the patterns that, according to v.4, should prevail (although it does not deny that good winds can come through the eight gates).”¹⁵

Although some confusion cannot be excluded, the connection of dew and rain with the maleficent aspects occurs four times¹⁶ and v. 4 explicitly states:

“and from those eight come winds of punishment; when they are sent, *they bring devastation* to the whole earth, and to the water which (is) on it, and to all those who dwell upon it, and to everything which is *in* the water and on the dry ground.”¹⁷

Therefore this *negative connection* is to be taken seriously. Consequently, dew can bear some negative connotations. A necessary question is: Did

äthiopische Henochbuch,” in *Jüdische Schriften aus der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit* (ed. Hermann Lichtenberger et al.; 6 vols.; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1984), 5:654.

11 Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden – Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brill – Eerdmans, 1997–1998), 1:438–39.

12 See Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 474.

13 From the southern cardinal direction come even the pleasant fragrances (see 76:8).

14 See B. Otzen, “ἄ,” *TDOT* 5:323.

15 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 475. See also p. 478–479.

16 The combinations are as follows: dew, rain, locusts, devastation (v. 9 and 10); mist, hoar-frost, snow, rain, dew, locusts (v. 11); dew, rain, hoar-frost, cold, snow, frost (v. 12).

17 Translation by Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 2:176.

the author of this part introduce it as his *innovation* or was he able to find some *traditionsgeschichtliches Gut*?

There is no occurrence in the Old Testament in which dew bears a negative connotation,¹⁸ or to be more precise, in which dew is associated with some devastation (except, of course, for the texts where a lack of dew or rain is mentioned). However, the suggested *traditionsgeschichtliches Gut* can be sought in some Mesopotamian sources. Many scholars accept that “the primitive or traditional system attested in works such as MUL.APIN and Enuma Anu Enlil XIV” is almost certainly “the background for much of the Enochic astronomy.”¹⁹ Comparative studies between cuneiform sources and the Enochic Astronomical Book suggest another conclusion which is “likely though not demonstrated: the original form of 1 Enoch 72–82 is an example of Jewish literature from the eastern Diaspora, where the author learned the astronomy contained in it.”²⁰ An explanation for the perplexing combination of dew with the maleficent aspects of the winds can be found in Mesopotamian sources, namely, in some magical material.

“The very names of certain diseases or disabilities indicate their astral cause. [...] As to the ‘semen’ or ‘sperm’ of the stars describing certain illnesses, it may be a name for ‘dew’ (which is elsewhere called ‘Blood of the stars’ [Artemidorus, *Oniromanticum* 4,22]), since dew is said to descend from the stars, and dew can be maleficent – ‘the evil dew of the stars’ – as well as soothing.”²¹

Dew coming from the stars is attested in the Lamaštu incantation (PBS I/2 113:53–54 and dupl.): “Like the dew of the stars [...] do not slip past the cap of the door pivot (*kīma nalši ša kakkabī* [...] *la taḥallupī*

18 I thank Ehud Ben Zvi for drawing my attention to some comparisons, which use the image of dew (evanescence as one of its features), in a somehow negative way (e.g., Hos 6:4; 13:3). However, the mentioned occurrences in 1 Enoch are not comparisons. There are two verses in 1 Enoch, which mention dew in a comparison: 39:5 (will be quoted later) and 42:3. The latter describes the personified Iniquity that went forth from her chambers and “those whom she did not seek she found, and she dwelt among them like rain in a desert and like dew in a thirsty land.” Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 138. For the dew in Hosea and the Old Testament see Valentino Bulgarelli, *L'immagine della rugiada nel libro di Osea: uso molteplice di una figura nella Bibbia ebraica e nella Settanta* (Supplementi alla Rivista Biblica 39; Bologna: EDB, 2003).

19 See the overview and the bibliography in Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 373–83.

20 Ibid., 383.

21 Erica Rainer, *Astral Magic in Babylonia* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1995), 102.

šerrāniš).”²² An example in which the evil and good sorts of dew occur together can be cited, namely the ritual for calming a panicked child (from the Kuyunjik-Kompendium; § 13):

Aa 41': [na-al-š]u lem-nu ša MUL.MEŠ a-a TE-ku f 6: na-al-šú Aa 42': KÙ qud-du-šu UGU-ka lim-qut	“194:...Einen Hartriegel-Baum reinigst du gleich bei Sonnenuntergang; folgen- dermaßen sprichst du: 195: 'Der schlimme [Ta]u der Sterne möge sich dir nicht nähern, 196: (nur) reiner, heiliger Tau möge auf dich fallen!’”²³
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Another relevant example can be found in the famous ritual *Maqlû*. There is an incantation mentioning dew in a negative way in the fifth tablet (V, 76–82), from which some lines are to be cited:

“(76) Beschwörung: ‘Wer auch immer du bist, Hexe, die wie der Südwind fünfzehn Tage lang aufgehäuft hat, (77) neun Tage lang Nebel, ein Jahr lang Tau, (78) (die) Gewölk zusammengeballt hat und gegen mi[ch] hingetreten ist: (79) Ich erhebe mich gegen dich wie der Scherer des Himmels, der [Nord]wind...’”²⁴

In this case a witch is responsible for the dew therefore it is necessary to do something against it. Interestingly, the witch is associated with the southern wind while the northern functions as a positively working counterpart.²⁵ One of the potency incantations (ŠĀ.ZI.GA) mentions a request “And do not release the dew of the daughters of Anu (*na-al-ši*

22 See CAD N1, 203; Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 244.

23 Walter Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf! Mesopotamische Baby-Beschwörungen und -Rituale* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 62–63. The introduced akkadian text is combined on the ground of the *Partiturnumschrift* Farber's. In the case of the text f he partly reconstructs the logogram [MU]L after *nalšū*. For the comparisons, e.g., [tu].ra šèg.[gin- (GIM)] mu.un.šèg.gá.ta : [ultu] muršu k[īma na-a]l-ši iznunu “after disease had rained like dew” (KAR 375 r. iv 25f.), see CAD N1, 202–203.

24 Tzvi Abusch and Daniel Schwemer, “Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual Maqlû (‘Verbrennung’),” in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Gernot Wilhelm; vol. 4 of *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Neue Folge*, ed. Bernd Janowski et al.; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 162.

25 See Daniel Schwemer, *Abwehrzauber und Behexung. Studien zum Schadenzauberglauben im alten Mesopotamien (Unter Benutzung von Tzvi Abuschs Kritischem Katalog und Sammlungen im Rahmen des Kooperationsprojektes Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Rituals)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 105.

DUMU.SAL ^dA-nim)!" in the line 7.²⁶ Although the text of the incantation is not everywhere clear, "it is probable that our line should be understood as illness-bringing dew."²⁷

The author of the Astronomical Book seems to have known about some negative connotations of dew from Mesopotamian traditions which he creatively used. The distinction between positive and negative dews is well known in the rabbinic literature. According to the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Hag.* 12b) "harmful dews" are stored in the sixth heaven²⁸:

"Makon: that in which (are) the storehouses of snow and the storehouses of hail, and the high dwelling-place of harmful dews and the high dwelling-place of drops."²⁹

מכון שבו אוצרות שלג ואוצרות ברד ועליית טללים רעים ועליית אגלים

Other texts (*b. Sukkah* 37b and *Lev. Rab.*) mention prayers against harmful dews.³⁰ Paragraphs 4 and 5 of *Lev. Rab.* 28:2 "form a little anthology of materials relevant to the sheaf of grain,"³¹ in which we read (4B):

"That is in line with what is written, 'Who keeps for us statutes of weeks of the harvest' [Jer. 5:24]. May he keep us from the parching winds, may he keep us from the harmful dew³² [ישמור לנו מן השרב ישמור לנו מן טללים רעים].³³ And when [do these come]? They come during the seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost [...]."³⁴

For Mark Elliott, the wind rose in ch. 76 is an expression of the author's covenantal theology, which can be observed (in the Astronomical Book and in the Book of the Watchers) in the three main indicators of their cosmology (calendar; covenantal witness motif; blessing and curse

26 Robert D. Biggs, *ŠA.ZI.GA. Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1967), 18.

27 Ibid., 19.

28 See Alexander Kulik, *3 Baruch. Greek-Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch* (CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 304.

29 The Hebrew text is introduced from R' Hersch Goldwurm et al., eds., *Schottenstein Edition Talmud Bavli* (73 vols.; New York: Mesorah Publications, 1996–2004), 22:12b.

30 See Kulik, *3 Baruch*, 304.

31 Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: the Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 485.

32 Under this term could be understood the case when a heavy dew can damage crops, causing them to rot on the stalk. I thank Diana Edelman for this explanation.

33 The Hebrew text is introduced from Mordecai Margulies, *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah (Leviticus Rabbah: A Critical Edition Based on Manuscripts and Genizah Fragments with Variants and Notes* (4 vols.; London – Jerusalem: Ararat, 1954–1958), 3:652 (Hebrew).

34 Translation by Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture*, 484.

speculation), all related in one or another way to covenant.³⁵ VanderKam is right that “[i]t is surely awkward that an author for whom the covenant is supposed to be fundamental never mentions it [...]. He is speaking about natural phenomena and gives no reason to think he is speaking in covenantal terms.”³⁶ Although his main interests lay in cosmology, however, the blessing and punishment motif peaks out as verses 76:4 and 14 show, mentioning the winds of blessing and of punishment. This idea is more clearly formulated and expanded in the Book of Parables 59:1–3, which mentions even lightnings, luminaries, etc., “for a blessing or for a curse.” Did the author of ch. 76 already want to evoke an idea of judgment?

Two last occurrences of dew in the Book of the Watchers (34:2; 36:1) appear in chapters 34:1–36:2, which are parallel to ch. 76, or “[t]aken as a whole, this section looks like a summary of what is now chap. 76” and 36:1 especially is a very brief summary of 76:7–9.³⁷ Unlike ch. 76, the information in 34:1–36:2 “is part of an explicit travelogue.”³⁸

In the context of Enoch’s journeys dew occurs along with water in the description of a place in the mountainous part of the desert east of Jerusalem (28:1–3). While the scenes in chs. 26–27, centering on and around Jerusalem, contain the recognizable ‘theological’ motifs, the following chapters 28–32 seem mostly to offer details from a real travel-account.³⁹ The torrent or aqueduct (towards the north-west) of v. 3 has been identified with the aqueduct from ‘Ain Mousa into Petra by Milik.⁴⁰ “The text certainly gives the impression that the author has a definite place in mind and the details fit the ‘mountainous region’ of the desert where Petra is situated.”⁴¹

Dew is mentioned actually for the first time in ch. 2, where by means of a series of exhortations the author wants the addressee to observe the marvelous order of God’s creation. A similarity to the wisdom tradition can hardly be overlooked.⁴² Dew is enumerated together with rain, water and clouds (v. 2). From the discussion above it is clear

35 See Mark A. Elliott, “Covenant and Cosmology in the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book,” *Henoch* 24 (2002): 23–38.

36 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 481.

37 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 331–32.

38 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 470.

39 See Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch. A New English Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 175.

40 See Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 233.

41 Black, *Book of Enoch*, 175.

42 See the excursus on Traditions about Nature’s Obedience and Humanity’s Disobedience in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 152–55.

that in the Astronomical Book and the Book of the Watchers dew is almost exclusively an object of cosmological speculation or, in one case (ch. 28), of geographic description.

2. The Similitudes/Parables

The latest section of 1 Enoch continues the cosmological trend of the earlier sections. In the context of the First Parable Enoch describes the meteorological and astronomical secrets that his eyes saw (41:3):

*"And there my eyes saw the secrets of the flashes of lightning and of thunder, and the secrets of the winds, how they are distributed in order to blow over the earth, and the secrets of the clouds and of the dew; and there I saw whence they go out in that place, and (how) from there ... the dust of the earth is saturated."*⁴³

In the following passage, Enoch mentions different sorts of "storehouses" for the specific meteorological and astronomical phenomena. Although there are some common topics and similarities in both compositions (i.e., in the Similitudes and in the older Astronomical Book), they show "no clear sign of a *literary* relationship," as Ben-Dov⁴⁴ and especially VanderKam have shown.⁴⁵ As for the section in ch. 41, the differences in language are considerable (the central terms of the Similitudes, "secrets" and "storehouses,"⁴⁶ are not found in the Astronomical Book), so that this section more nearly resembles scriptural passages such as Ps 135:7 or Job 38:22.⁴⁷

VanderKam similarly considers the other relevant passage dealing with the different sorts of winds (60:11–23),⁴⁸ in which the wind of the dew is mentioned alongside the wind of the sea, the frost, the hail, the snow, the mist and the rain (60:20). The different storehouses⁴⁹ also play

43 Knibb, *Book of Enoch*, 2:128–29.

44 Jonathan Ben-Dov, "Exegetical Notes on Cosmology in the Book of Parables," in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: A Revisiting the Book of Parables* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 143–50.

45 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 395.

46 Ben-Dov draws attention to the interchangeability of the terms "storehouses" and "secrets," idem, "Exegetical Notes," 146.

47 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 395–396.

48 "Despite the overlaps for the specific entities, it is not obvious that the Book of Luminaries served as a source for the presentation in chap. 60." Ibid., 397.

49 There also is a verse (69:23) dealing with the storehouses in a context of the Cosmic Oath (69:13–25). However, the passage consisting of the vv. 22–24 probably is an in-

a role in this passage. Because the rationale for the placement of this cosmological material is uncertain, Nickelsburg asks: "Is it coincidental that an introduction about eschatological light (ch. 58) is followed immediately by a section that begins by treating lightning and the luminaries?"⁵⁰ In Nickelsburg's reorganization of the text the section is again followed by the other meteorological phenomena. The occurrence of dew in this context merits more attention. The wind or the spirit of the dew is characterized as follows:

"[it] (has) its dwelling at the ends of heaven (ማገደሩ፡በአጽናፈ፡ሰማይ), and it is connected with the storehouses of the rain; and its course (is) in winter and in summer, and its clouds and the clouds of the mist are associated, ... and one gives to the other."⁵¹

Although there is a reference to the storehouses of the wind of the rain (vv. 20–21) and to a special storehouse of the wind of the mist, which is not "associated with them in their storehouses" (v. 19) (i.e., those of the preceding winds), the expression "dwelling at the ends of heaven" is used for the description of the wind of the dew (for the location of the dew see 36:1–2 and 75:5). A comparison with the other occurrences of this expression, especially in the Similitudes, can shed some light on the text.

Klijn introduces a very short note on 2 Bar. 29:7 in his translation of this apocalyptic work: "About dew as an eschatological gift see 1 En. 60:20."⁵² However, he does not explain his reasons in the note. As Nickelsburg remarks the rationale for the placement of this cosmological material is uncertain. Therefore the only reason to interpret the dew in this way is the eschatological context and the expression "dwelling at the ends of heaven." One text of the Similitudes is particularly relevant. In 1En. 39:3 Enoch recounts how he was snatched up "from the face of the earth" and set down "at the end of heaven" (ውስተ፡ጽንፈ፡ሰማይት; or according to Tana 9 አጽናፈ፡ሰማይት "ends of heaven").⁵³ He continues (vv. 4–5):

terpolation. See Robert H. Charles, "I Enoch," in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (ed. Robert H. Charles; 2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 2:234; Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 310.

50 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 226.

51 Knibb, *Book of Enoch*, 2:147.

52 Albertus Frederik J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983 and 1985), 1:631. See also Daniel M. Gurtner, *Second Baruch: A Critical Edition of the Syriac Text: With Greek and Latin Fragments, English Translation, Introduction, and Concordances* (JCTCRS 5; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 67 n. 358.

53 Knibb, *Book of Enoch*, 2:126; 1:112.

"And there I saw {another vision} the dwellings (ገጽጽ) of the holy ones and the resting places of the righteous.⁵⁴ There my eyes saw their dwellings (ገጽጽ) with his righteous angels and their resting places with the holy ones. And they were petitioning and interceding and were praying for the sons of men. And righteousness was flowing like water before them, and mercy like dew upon the earth; thus it is among them forever and ever."⁵⁵

It seems that the dwelling of the wind of the dew is where the holy ones and the righteous dwell. Still, although an eschatological connotation of the dew is possible, the idea of some function of the dew in the messianic times or at the eschaton is not clearly articulated.

3. The Epistle of Enoch

In the context of Enoch's fifth discourse, the judgment is announced (100:10–102:3) after a short string of woes against the sinners (100:7–9). The dew functions alongside the other meteorological phenomena not only as a witness, but it is also active in the punishment:

"And all the clouds and mist and dew and rain will testify against you, for they will all be withheld from you so that they do not fall on you, and *they will think* about your sins. And now give gifts to the rain that it may not be withheld from falling on you, [...] and that the dew, if it has accepted gold and silver from you, may fall."⁵⁶ (vv. 11–12)

This idea is later underscored (101:2): "If he [= the Most High] closes the windows of heaven, and withholds the rain ... and the dew so that it does not fall on earth because of you, what will you do?"⁵⁷ This testimony takes the form of a drought and thus it is not only testimony

54 For the phrase {another vision} as an interpolation and the transposition of "the holy ones" and "the righteous" in the different text witnesses see Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch* 2, 111. The translation is by Nickelsburg with my addition of the Ethiopic words.

55 Cf. 71:3–4 in the context of Enoch's ascent to heaven: "And the angel Michael, one of the archangels, took hold of me ... by my right hand, and raised me, and led me out to all the secrets of mercy and the secrets of righteousness. And he showed me all the secrets of the ends of heaven and all the storehouses of all the stars and the lights, from where they come out before the holy ones." Knibb, *Book of Enoch*, 2:165–166.

56 Knibb, *Book of Enoch*, 2:235. For the differences between the Greek and Ethiopic text see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108* (CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 457, 460–61.

57 Ibid., 235–36. Regarding the Greek text ("the dew and the rain"), there is a transposition in the Ethiopic one. The Ethiopic "on/to the earth" is to be regarded as secondary. See Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108*, 469, 475.

but punishment, whereas the sinners become “the helpless victims of forces with which they cannot cope”⁵⁸ (cf. also 101:3). The irony in the invitation to bribe the meteorological forces and reinforced by the clause “if it has accepted gold and silver from you” in the Ethiopic (not the Greek^{CB}) text cannot be overlooked.⁵⁹

The idea that cosmological elements can testify is not new, as Deuteronomy applies this rhetorical device – in this case the witnesses are heaven and earth – to underscore the character of the covenant, more concretely, that God warned the people about the consequences of disobedience (see Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28).⁶⁰ The author of the Epistle adopted and adapted this idea with his nuances in a singular way. If the author of 2 *Bar.* recalls this Deuteronomic concept (19:1–2), he does it in a context in which God reminds Baruch of the establishing of the covenant in the time of Moses (cf. 84:2). The potential parallel seems to be found in the following verse (19:3), in which God says to Baruch: “Yet after his death they sinned and transgressed. Though they knew that they had the Law reproving (them), and the light in which nothing could err. Also the spheres which testify, and me.”⁶¹ For the spheres the Syriac uses *ܕܝܐܪܥܐ*, the Hebrew equivalent of which should be *מזלות*,⁶² the term meaning the cosmic entities or angelic figures; the context suggests the first meaning.⁶³ Still, the different states of moisture are not mentioned.

4. A comparative perspective: Some of the later apocalypses

To understand better the perception or the development of the dew concept it is necessary to consider its use in some later works, the apocalypses after the Fall of Jerusalem (i.e., 70 CE), mainly the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch.

Second Baruch, called the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch because of the language in which it is preserved and put under the authority of

58 Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 506.

59 See Charles, “1 Enoch,” in *Apocrypha* (ed. Charles), 2:272; Black, *Book of Enoch*, 308; Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch* 91–108, 462.

60 See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 208.

61 Translation by Gurtner, *Second Baruch*, 51.

62 See Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, *L'Apocalypse Syriacque de Baruch* (2 vols.; SC 144–145; Paris: Cerf, 1969), 2:46.

63 See Peter Juhás, *Sýrska Baruchova apokalypsa 1–21. Preklad a komentár* (Košice: Vienaľa, 2011), 107.

Jeremiah's secretary, can be dated approximately to the end of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century CE. The work surely reflects the catastrophe of the year 70 CE, and tries to answer many complicated questions related to this religious and national tragedy.⁶⁴

The first occurrence of the dew motif is to be found in the lament of Baruch (ch. 10), expressed after Jeremiah and the people had gone away and he had returned to the gates of the temple. According to Baruch, the catastrophe of Zion has a cosmic character. There is no longer any meaning, not only in agriculture, but also in moisture itself:⁶⁵ "And you, heavens, keep your dew, and do not open the storehouses of rain [ἄνεμα ἡ γῆ]"⁶⁶ (10:11). The author of 2 *Bar.* reflects the idea of storehouses as found, for example, in the Similitudes and some OT passages (Deut 28:12; cf. Job 38:22; Ps 135:7; Jer 10:13), but he does not use the concept of the gates found in the Astronomical Book.

The theologically more interesting idea occurs in the context of the messianic times. Ch. 29 describes the different aspects of the beginning of the revelation of the Messiah (see v. 3). After having described an abundance of food and natural products, the author (though it is virtually God's own speech) states that the people will see wonders every day (see v. 6):

"For winds will go out from before me to bring every morning the fragrance of aromatic fruits, and at the end of the day clouds distilling the dew of *healing/cure* [ἄνεμα ἡ γῆ]. And it will happen at that very time that the treasury of manna [ἄνεμα ἡ γῆ] will again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who have come to the completion of time (vv. 7–8)."⁶⁷

In the seventh verse the parallels to the Enochic traditions, especially to the Astronomical Book, are to be noted. The author of 2 *Bar.* seems to have adapted the idea of the wind rose with his own nuances. Although he speaks of the winds, he devotes most of his attention to the southern wind of the wind rose, which is the only one combining "pleasant fragrances" with the dew (1 *En* 76:8). Another aspect connected with the southern (and northern) wind is life, in the Ethiopic ሕይወት; a word meaning 'life(time), healing, good health, salvation, res-

64 For the introductory problems see Matthias Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel* (TSAJ 142; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 1–70.

65 See Juhás, *Sýrska Baruchova apokalypsa*, 79.

66 Translation by Gurtner, *Second Baruch*, 41.

67 Ibid., 67. The word in cursive has been changed by me.

toration' etc.⁶⁸ The dew in 2 Bar. 29:7 is called "the dew of healing," a result of the author's combination and adaptation. An association of the dew with the clouds is only natural, expressed also in the sources (11Q10 XXXI, 6; 1 En 41:3; cf. 60:20; 100:11–12). There is another relevant text that probably influenced the author of 2 Bar., namely Isa 26:19 as preserved in the Septuagint,⁶⁹ where the Hebrew כִּי טֵל אֶזְרָת טֵלֶךָ (NRSV: "For your dew is a radiant dew") has as its counterpart the following wording: ἡ γὰρ δρόσος ἡ παρὰ σοῦ ἰαμα αὐτοῖς ἐστίν ("For the dew (which is) from you is a healing for them").⁷⁰

Surely, this special sort of dew is connected with the messianic times. However, another problem concerns its function in the context of the resurrection. The following chapter of 2 Bar. announces a return of the Messiah in glory, which is a presupposition for the resurrection: "Then all who have fallen asleep in hope of him will rise" (30:1). The relation between these two chapters regarding their content is not absolutely clear. 2 Bar. seems to know about two distinct phases of the messianic times, "an initial phase during historical time that will be felt in Israel only and a second phase that will inaugurate the world to come and fundamentally change human life and the world at large."⁷¹ Hence, the dew would have its place and function in the first phase, as indicated by ch. 29. However, does it have no function in the event of the resurrection at all? The rabbis understood the rain and the dew to be instruments of the resurrection of the dead, as the following example shows (*Pirke R. El.* 34; *Yalqut Shim'oni* II, 988):

"R. Tanhum said: On account of the seed of the earth which discharges the dew for the resurrection of the dead, when it (the earth) is commanded to do so, (we ask) from where does it (the dew) descend? From the head of the Holy One, blessed be He, for the head of the Holy One, blessed be He, is full of reviving dew. In the future life the Holy One, blessed be He, will shake His head and cause the reviving dew to descend, as it is written: ... *for my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of the night* (Song 5:2)."⁷²

68 See Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 252.

69 See Bogaert, *L'Apocalypse Syriaque*, 1:357–358; 2:65.

70 For an interpretation of the LXX text see Arie van der Kooij, "Zur Theologie des Jesajabuches in der Septuaginta," in *Theologische Probleme der Septuaginta und der hellenistischen Hermeneutik* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow; VWGT 11; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 22–24.

71 Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism*, 298. See also his discussion on Klaus Koch's "zweistufige Messianologie."

72 Brigitte Kern-Ulmer, "Consistency and Change in Rabbinic Literature as Reflected in the terms *Rain* and *Dew*," *JSJ* 26 (1995): 74.

To answer the question of the dew's relation to the resurrection clearly is not easy. The same idea from 2 *Bar.* 29:7, with a slightly varied wording, is expressed in 2 *Bar.* 73:2, a part of another description of the messianic age. However, this occurrence does not help, as the context is ambiguous; it does not refer clearly to the resurrection of the dead.

"And then healing will descend in dew [⁷³ܕܠܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ], and disease will disappear, and fear and anguish and lamentation will pass from among men, and gladness will spread through all the earth. And no one will again die when it is not his time [ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ], nor will any adversity suddenly occur (73:2–3)."⁷⁴

Although Baruch is elsewhere informed while on his heavenly journey about a lake of dew ("dew of heaven"⁷⁵ 3 *Bar.* 10:9), surrounded by a plain where "the souls of the righteous come when they assemble" (v. 5) and he had already been told the Phoenix (a symbol of immortality in Greek tradition)⁷⁶ feeds on the "manna of heaven and the dew of earth" (6:11),⁷⁷ nowhere is it clearly stated that the dew would be one of the instruments of the resurrection. Concerning the Apocalypse of Abraham, Rubinkiewicz suggests that the doctrine of the resurrection, which is noticeably absent, "may be reflected in the symbol of the dew (19:4)."⁷⁸

Considering the concept of dew and its function in the resurrection events it seems these apocalyptic works know an inchoate concept, not yet clearly formulated, which is developed further in the later rabbinic writings, i.e., the dew is one of the instruments of the resurrection. Still, according to 2 *Bar.* the dew belongs to the first phase of the messianic times and their abundance.

5. Summary

In the Astronomical Book and the Book of the Watchers dew is almost exclusively an object of cosmological speculation or, in one case (ch.

⁷³ Read as ܕܠܝܠܐ, see Bogaert, *L'Apocalypse Syriacque*, 2:129.

⁷⁴ Gurtner, *Second Baruch*, 117.

⁷⁵ On the dichotomy of two sorts of dew see Kulik, 3 *Baruch*, 303–4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 303.

⁷⁷ The translation of 3 *Bar.* by Harry E. Gaylord, "3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch," in *Pseudepigrapha* (ed. Charlesworth), 1:671. According to the Slavonic version it feeds on the "heavenly manna." *Ibid.*, 670.

⁷⁸ Ryszard Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," in *Pseudepigrapha* (ed. Charlesworth), 1:685.

28), of geographic description. Regarding the perplexing association of dew with some maleficent aspects, the author of the Astronomical Book seems to have known about it from Mesopotamian traditions which he creatively used. In the Similitudes, it seems that the dwelling of the wind of the dew is where the holy ones and the righteous dwell. Although an eschatological connotation of the dew is possible, the idea of some function of the dew in the messianic times or at the eschaton is not clearly articulated. According to the Epistle, the dew participates not only in a testimony against the sinners, but also in their punishment. Considering the concept of dew and its function in the resurrection events it seems some of the later apocalyptic works know an inchoate concept, not yet clearly formulated, which is developed further in the later rabbinic writings, i.e., the dew is one of the instruments of the resurrection. Still, according to 2 *Bar.* the dew belongs to the first phase of the messianic times and their abundance.

Living Water by the Dead Sea: Some Water Metaphors in the Qumran Scrolls

SAMUEL I. THOMAS

Water was a central interest of the people who wrote and preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls and inhabited the site of Khirbet Qumran.¹ This was no doubt due in part to the arid conditions of most of the Judean countryside, in which the presence or absence of water was of perpetual concern. Of course, water also functioned ritually and conceptually in Hebrew scriptural texts, and by the mid-late Second Temple period water had a well-developed place in the life and thought of Jewish communities engaged in the study of scripture and the maintenance of the purity systems associated with the Jerusalem temple.

Because water (or lack thereof) was presumably a crucial element in the lived experience and religious imaginary of the inhabitants of Judea, its metaphoric and conceptual values figured prominently in the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Jewish literature. As Ehud Ben Zvi has

1 The issue of water strikes to the heart of the controversies about the relationship between the manuscripts and the settlement. Did the water cisterns at Qumran function as ritual baths? Was the purity system of texts like 4QMMT and the *Community Rule* actually practiced? Where and by whom? As will be apparent throughout this essay, it is difficult to speak about water in the Dead Sea Scrolls without inevitably making assumptions about the topography, hydrology, and architecture of the site of Qumran. In spite of this tension, the emerging consensus of Dead Sea Scrolls research is that the Scrolls represent a rather broad range of literary and religious texts that do manifest some coherence as a collection (or even set of collections), even though they cannot be assumed to stem from a single group. There is a core group of sectarian texts whose contents suggest a connection with a single (though evolving and geographically diverse) movement known as the “New Covenant” (as in the Damascus Document) and the Yahad (as in the *Community Rule*), and some element of this broad association likely inhabited the site of Qumran. See especially John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Alison Schofield, *From Qumran to the Yahad: A New Paradigm of Textual Development for The Community Rule* (STDJ 77; Leiden: Brill, 2008). While there is virtually no aspect of Qumran archaeology that goes uncontested, the presence of what appear to be ten *miqva’ot* at Khirbet Qumran makes it highly likely that the site was used for religious purposes involving water. For a summary see Ronny Reich, “*Miqva’ot*,” *EDSS* 1:560–63; cf. Bryant G. Wood, “Water Systems,” *EDSS* 2:968–70.

argued in the leading essay of this volume, there is perhaps an important cognitive relationship between these lived, geographic realities and the development of water metaphors—a kind of bio-cultural, religio-linguistic process by which water language comes to express both the “actual experiences” (if we may speak of such a thing) involving water as well as a range of conceptual values with special literary and religious significance.

There are references throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls to many different types of “water”: springs, rain, sea, streams and rivers, etc. But in the space of this essay it is possible to provide neither an exhaustive analysis of water tropes in the Dead Sea Scrolls nor a comprehensive reassessment of the archaeology of Qumran as it relates to water. Instead I hope to highlight several instances in which Qumran sectarian texts employ water metaphors as part of the community discourse.² Here the Qumran *Hodayot*, the *Community Rule*, the *Damascus Document*, and the pesharim are especially rich sources for “thinking about water,” though other Qumran texts are also salient to the discussion. In the course of the essay I will draw from work in linguistics and performance studies to provide a new interpretive frame for understanding some of these metaphors.

1. “Diggers of the Well” and “Living Waters”

Toward the end of the introductory discourse in the *Damascus Document* (the “admonitions,” CD 1:1–3:16), the composition declares that a certain group of people—the text’s protagonists—were the recipients of “hidden things” (נסתרות) that allowed them to fulfill the desires of God’s will. For their part, these special people “dug a well of much water” (וַיַּחפְרוּ בֹאֵר לַמַּיִם רַבִּים) (CD 3:16) and thought that those who rejected these waters would perish (לֹא יִהְיֶה).³

The metaphor of “digging a well” signified the deep cultivation of correct knowledge and praxis—knowing and doing the commandments of God (מִצְוֹת אֵל). God, by means of his wondrous mysteries (בְּרִי

2 Given our own contemporary global water situation—and the circumstances of the watersheds where I live, in Ventura County, CA—I am also interested in the ways in which the remains from Qumran might help us frame water, as metaphor and as source of biological life, for our own time. This must remain a topic for a future essay.

3 The difference between בֹּאֵר and בּוֹר seems primarily orthographic in Qumran texts, and both spellings are used even in the same composition (e.g., CD 3:16; 11:13).

פלא), covered over their sins and built for them a “faithful house in Israel” (בית נאמן בישראל) in which the elect of the elect shall dwell (CD 3:17–20). The metaphor of digging a well is clarified later in the *Damascus Document*, in a passage that reveals the scriptural precedent for the concept:

But God remembered the covenant of the forebears, and He raised up from Aaron understanding ones, and from Israel wise ones, and he taught them. And they dug the well:

“The well the princes dug,
the nobles of the people dug,
with the scepter, with the staff” (Num 21:18)⁴

The well is the Law, and its diggers, they are the repentant ones of Israel who went out of the land of Judah and dwelled in the land of Damascus (CD 6:2–5)

This metaphor is a good example of the kind of cognitive blend outlined by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner in their book, *The Way We Think*. In such a conceptual blend (which may draw upon linguistic cues from either literary tropes or everyday language and experience) inputs from different spaces, connected by a “generic space” that includes what both inputs share, are integrated into a blend—the space in which new meaning is actualized. In an example given by Fauconnier and Turner, “trashcan basketball” is the result of a conceptual blend that involves the integration of the basketball and trash inputs to result in a “blended space” that makes possible a new conceptual arrangement.⁵

4 All translations of biblical texts in this essay are from the NRSV.

5 Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); cf. R. Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); E. Hutchins, “Material Anchors for Conceptual Blends,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 37 (2005): 1555–77.

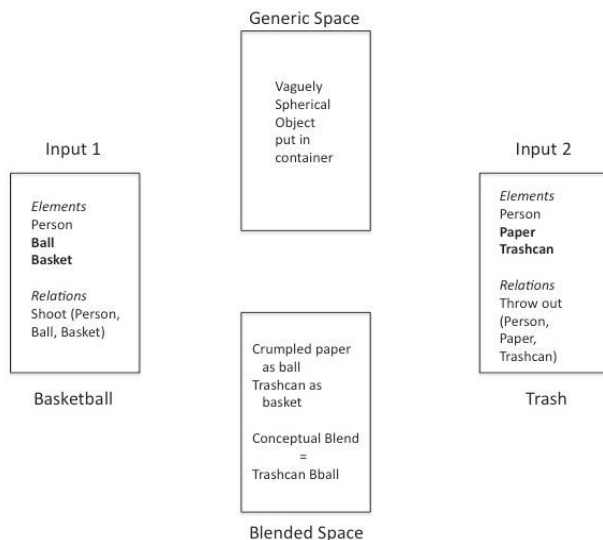


Figure 1

In the present example, the input provided by the scriptural lemma (the Numbers story of the presumably actual digging of a well in the wilderness) is blended with an input regarding the study and performance of the Law to yield a new conceptual field in which the well = the Law and the diggers = those who understand and practice it properly.

The force of this new conceptual blend is made more potent and multivalent by virtue of its geographic context: in the Numbers passage, the digging of the well was part of a wilderness narrative that culminated in deliverance and covenantal mutuality. In the *Damascus Document*, the wilderness has been relocated and the well has been analogized: in this *new* covenant, a *new* well must be dug—not one of water, but of sectarian knowledge and practice that conforms to a projected idealization of the past.⁶ Thus the blend would look at least in part like the following:

6 The wilderness context of Qumran is likely significant for understanding the function of that kind of space/place within the life of the sectarian communities represented by the Qumran manuscripts. For discussion of the concept of “wilderness” and its functions, see Alison Schofield, “Re-Placing Priestly Space: The Wilderness as Heterotopia in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam, Volume 1* (JSJSup 153; Eric Mason, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 469–90; idem, *From Qumran to the Yahad*, 159–62; Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 88–121; George Brooke, “Isaiah 40:3 and the Wilderness Community,” in *New*

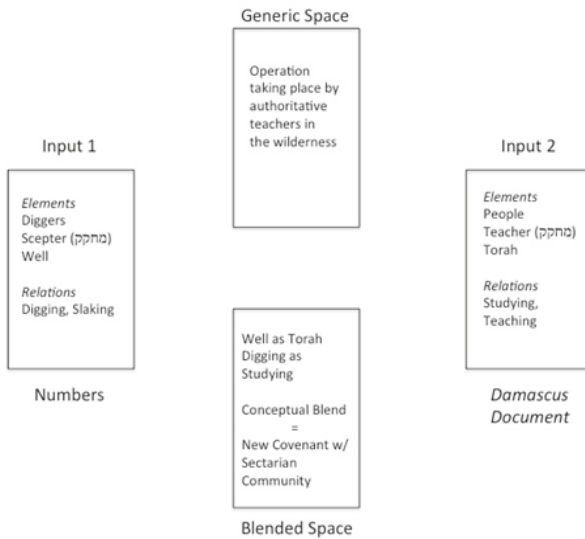


Figure 2

There may be yet additional levels of meaning at work in this phrase, akin to what Maxine Grossman has called a “complication of semantic fields” in the *Damascus Document*.⁷ The lexeme באר occurs in both noun and verb forms in biblical and Qumran texts: the verb באר means “to make plain” or “to clarify”; the noun signifies a well, pit, or cistern. While the etymological connection between these two meanings is not evident, the root’s potential for multivalence may have been exploited by the authors of the *Damascus Document* and of *Pesher Habakkuk*.

In 1QpHab 6:15–7:5 the scriptural lemma “Write down the vision; make it plain on tablets” (כתוב חזון ובאר על הלוחות, Hab 2:2) refers to the work of the Teacher of Righteousness, who alone (according to the text) could read it—or could understand its clear sense and in turn make it plain to “the men of truth, the doers of the Law” (אנשי האמת עושי התורה, 1QpHab 7:10–11). While it may be wise to retain a *Sitz im Leben* distinc-

Qumran Texts and Studies: Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Paris 1992 (ed. George Brooke and Florentino García Martínez; STDJ 15; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 117–32; James C. VanderKam, “The Judean Desert and the Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Antikes Judentum und Frühes Christentum: Festschrift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. B. Kollmann, et al.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 159–71; idem, “Sinai Revisited,” in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. Matthias Henze; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 44–60.

⁷ Maxine L. Grossman, *Reading for History in the Damascus Document: A Methodological Study* (STDJ 45; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 182.

tion between the reading of the Law in the *Damascus Document* (as a “well”) and the reading of prophetic literature by the Teacher of Righteousness (making it plain for the “men of the Law”), another Qumran passage may point to an overlap of the two semantic valences.

1Q22 (*Apocryphon of Moses*), a text perhaps related to other Moses-pseudepigrapha from Qumran and likely produced within a pre-sectarian milieu, presents a Deuteronomic rewriting of the early history of the covenant by paraphrasing pentateuchal passages along with supplementation.⁸ The relevant portion states,

So it shall be, [when] I [finish giving] the covenant and commanding [the] w[ay tha]t you should walk in, [appoint for yourselves wise men who] should explain (לְבַאֵר) [to you and to] your [children] all [these] words of the L[aw]. (1Q 22 1 ii 7–8)

Here the *Apocryphon of Moses* envisions the appointment of “wise men” who can explain the Law (cf. CD 6:2–5 cited above)—a provision not in the book of Deuteronomy itself but found in an analogous form in Nehemiah 8, for example—for the purpose of correct “walking,” or *halakhic* observance of Torah (הִדְרֵךְ אֶשְׁרֵי תִלְכוּ). While it is difficult to know for certain whether the authors of the *Damascus Document* or the Habakkuk pesher were directly familiar with this *Apocryphon*, this passage at least provides evidence that multiple semantic possibilities for בָּאֵר were potentially active within the linguistic milieu of the Qumran sectarians. Thus the “making plain” of the latent meanings of scripture is overlaid with the alternate lexical valence of (digging) a “well.”⁹

2. Living Waters

In another passage in the *Damascus Document* the “well” is coupled with the phrase “the living water” (מֵיִם הַחַיִּים), invoking a term that appears elsewhere in the discourse of the sectarian movement(s).¹⁰ In this

8 See J. T. Milik, “Dires de Moïse,” DJD 1:91–97; cf. Devorah Dimant, “Apocryphon of Jeremiah C,” DJD 30:91–260.

9 Other Qumran texts deploy the term “well” in a fashion that is of interest here, though many of them are fragmentary enough to prohibit a full reconstruction of context. For example, in 4QBeatitudes, which shows other affinities with sectarian texts such as the *Community Rule*, the *Hodayot*, and the *War Scroll*, there is a reference to “those who drink the well from the waters of the spring,” yet it is not clear what the broader meaning of the passage may have been (4Q525 24 ii 9).

10 Jonathan Lawrence has discussed some of the metaphorical uses of water language in the Scrolls, including a short section on “living waters,” in his *Washing in Water*:

case some of the “men of the new covenant” (i.e., the covenant community of the *Damascus Document*), those who later “turned away from the well of living water” (ויסורו מבאר מים חיים) by rejecting God’s commandments, will be cut off and erased from the memory of the community (CD 19:32–35). Such forms of betrayal appear to have received especially vehement scorn in the Damascus Covenant and the Yahad (cf. 1QH^a 13:25–28), perhaps because of the secretive nature of some of the “intellectual property” of the community (e.g., 1QS 8:11–14).¹¹

In an especially florid section of one of the so-called “Teacher Hymns” of the *Hodayot*, the speaker draws upon several water and plant metaphors and declares that “You, O my God, have placed Your words in my mouth, as showers of early rain for all [who thirst] and as a spring of living waters” (מבוע מים חיים) (1QH^a 14:17).¹² This astonishing claim has parallels in other parts of the *Hodayot*, in which the first-person speech of the protagonist is elevated almost to the level of divine speech—as if the scriptures have become indistinguishable from their interpretation and internalization by the speaker (1QH^a 23:11–14; 4Q471b 1–10 [1QH^a 26:6–16]; cf. 4Q491c 6–8; Sir 24:27).¹³ Like other sectarian texts, the *Hodayot* frames the acquisition of knowledge in terms of both water and dualistic oppositions, so that the “living water” of

Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature (Academia Biblica 23; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 81–154. He also provides a helpful review of the terminology and function related to various kinds of “washing” in both the Hebrew Bible and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

- 11 For a lengthier discussion see Samuel I. Thomas, *The “Mysteries” of Qumran: Mystery, Secrecy, and Esotericism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Early Judaism and Its Literature 25; Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 35–79.
- 12 For a helpful discussion of the current theories regarding the *Hodayot* compositions—especially the question about the provenance and function of the “Teacher Hymns”—see Angela Kim Harkins, “Who Is the Teacher of the Teacher Hymns? Re-Examining the Teacher Hymns Hypothesis Fifty Years Later,” in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam, Volume 1* (ed. Eric Mason, et al.; JSJSup 153; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 449–67; cf. idem, *Reading with an “I” to the Heavens: Looking at the Qumran Hodayot through the Lens of Visionary Traditions*, (Ekstasis 3; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012). In another article (and in *Reading with an “I”*), Kim Harkins argues that the hymn found in 1QH^a 13:22–15:8 (from which the above passage is cited) was generated from an exegetical performance of another hymn (1QH^a 11:6–19), and is not a hymn composed by the Teacher but rather was engendered by a sympathetic alignment with the presumed experiences of the Teacher. Thus the language used in this hymn was the product of an experience of the imaginal world of the base text (“The Performative Reading of the Hodayot: The Arousal of Emotions and the Exegetical Generation of Texts,” *JSP* 21 [2011]: 55–71). Here the numbering system, text, and translations are derived from Eileen Schuller, DJD 40.
- 13 In 4QInstruction, a text that was clearly important among the members of the *Yahad*, proper study of the “right times” (for the purpose of farming) was related to a “spring of living water” (4Q418 103 ii 6).

the protagonist(s) is set against the vocal clamor, the “roar of mighty waters” (המון מים רבים) that is the speech of those whose wickedness and fraud “destroy a multitude.” The heart of the protagonist “melts like water” while holding fast to the covenant, while the waves of the wicked pile high (1QH^a 10:29–30; cf. 1QH^a 13:10). In another hymn, the speaker has become “as a sailor on a ship in the raging seas” whose “waves and all their breakers come over me”—the speech of the opponents is a return to the watery chaos (1QH^a 14:25–27), while the speech of the speaker comes from the “spring of understanding” (עין בינה) that God has hidden within him (1QH^a 13:28).¹⁴

To return to the wilderness concept, the use of the term “fountain” or “spring” (מבוע) seems significant, and one might surmise that here again there is a re-deployment of scriptural imagery for a new situation. Of the three uses of this word in the entire biblical corpus, two of them are found in eschatological passages in the book of Isaiah (the other is in Ecclesiastes). In both of these passages, there is an effective contrast between the scorching wind and burning sand of the desert (the “wilderness”) and the “springs of water” מְבוּעֵי מַיִם that accompany the divine ingathering to Zion (Isa 35:5–10; cf. Isa 49:8–13; Zech 14:8).

Thus the speaker(s) in the *Hodayot* passage may have intentionally invoked this Isaianic language to suggest yet another metaphorical equivalence (or blend): the “desert” is the parched souls of all those who thirst (for knowledge of Torah), and the “spring of waters” is the first-person speech of the text’s protagonist(s), whose instruction will help to bring about the eschatological reality. Another possibility is that the “well” and the “living waters” of the sectarians are understood as a *reversal* of the condemnation of Jeremiah: “For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water (מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים), and dug out cisterns (בְּאֵרוֹת) for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer 2:13). The “well” (בֶּאֱרָ) of the *Yahad* was one that could hold “living waters.”

Whether a “well” or “spring” or “fountain of living water,” these were all ways of referring to the ongoing interpretive task of making plain Torah for the purpose of “walking in the way.”¹⁵ Another use of water—both as metaphor and as fluid—was connected to the practice of ritual ablution in water for the purpose of purification. Thus the

14 These passages are part of a single composition that spans several columns of 1QH^a (1QH^a 13:22–15:8).

15 The idea of correct interpretation of scripture as a kind of water-yielding well is suggested in other texts that employ water as a metaphor for knowledge or truth: cf. 1QSB 1:6; 1QpHab 11:1; 1QH^a 16:14.

major functions of water metaphors ostensibly point to the primary religious practices of the community: the reading and interpreting of scripture, and acts of ritual purification. As I will argue toward the end of this essay, these two sets of religious practices appear to have been integrated at times into the ritual-performative operations of the sectarians.

3. Waters of Purification

Among the many references to water in the Dead Sea Scrolls are the specific regulations involving the use of water for ritual purification.¹⁶ This is interesting for a variety of reasons, not least of which are the multiple levels of metaphoric “thinking about water” at work in these passages. Ritual purification for sacrificial/Temple-based worship is at least in part inherently metaphorical: physical washing creates an analog condition of ritual purity that renders the supplicant fit for the divine presence. In the case of Qumran sectarian texts, the ritual setting of the Temple has been replaced with the one of the community itself—a metaphoric “Temple” (e.g., 1QS 8:4–7)—in which ritual purification was required for the purpose of worship.¹⁷ In this way the language of water purification in the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls is (at least) doubly metaphorical, serving to translate the act of washing (or sprinkling or immersing) into several other spheres of meaning, both spatial and temporal. Purification involved not only the use of water, but was derived from specific ways of thinking about water and the efficacy of water rituals.

The *Community Rule* mentions several kinds of rituals involving water: “waters of impurity/sprinkling” (מי נדה), sanctification in seas and rivers (יתקדש בימים ונהרות), and “waters of washing” (מי רחץ). But none of these are able to purify the one who has not adequately taken the “laws of God” (משפטי אל) to heart (1QS 2:25–3:9). The potential community member must submit himself with a humble attitude before all God’s laws; only at this point, that is, when he has conformed

16 See Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 81–154.

17 Much has been written about the purity systems in the Qumran Scrolls—which, of course, extend well beyond issues involving water. For a helpful summary, bibliography, and review of the issues, see especially Ian Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 72; Leiden: Brill, 2007), esp. 4–18. It deserves to be noted here that I am not proposing to analyze the purity systems in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but rather simply to focus on the function of water language within the sectarian discourse about purity among the Damascus Covenant and the *Yahad*.

himself to instruction, may he be “sprinkled with the waters of separation and be made holy with the waters of purification” (להזות במי נדה ולהתקדש במי דוכי).¹⁸ All this may be illuminated by the discussion above: such ritual acts of purification are efficacious only for the one who has access to the “well” (to use the language of the *Damascus Document*) of Torah.

In the next column, which is part of the Treatise on the Two Spirits, the *Community Rule* makes more explicit the connection between ritual purification and knowledge—that is, the metaphorical subservience of the former to the latter.¹⁹ The passage needs to be quoted in full:

By his truth God will then purge all human deeds, and purify for himself some of the sons of man in order to bring to an end every spirit of evil from the inmost parts of the flesh, and to cleanse it from all deeds of wickedness by a spirit of holiness. Like purifying waters (כמי נדה), he will sprinkle each one with a spirit of truth—against all abominations of lying and polluting by a spirit of impurity (בריוה נדה)—in order to give the upright insight into knowledge of the Most High and wisdom of the angels (בני שמים), making wise those perfect of the way. Indeed, God has chosen them for an eternal covenant, and all the glory of Adam will be for them. (1QS 4:20–23)

In this passage the *מי נדה* are sprinkled by God metaphorically—“like purifying waters”—in order to provide *protection against* impurity (and not, it seems, in order to purify from sin *ex post facto*) and establish the conditions for divine insight. The “spirit of truth” leads to knowledge of the Most High and wisdom of the angels for the ones who follow the perfect way—the way of the sect’s interpretation and enactment of Torah piety (cf. 1QS 3:10; 8:10; 9:18, etc.).

A similar idea is expounded in another section of the *Community Rule* that is not part of the Treatise on the Two Spirits: “[The men of iniquity] are not to enter into the waters so as to contact the purity of the men of holiness. For one may not be purified without first turning from their evil, for impurity is in all who transgress [God’s] word” (1QS 5:13–14; cf. 4Q414 2 ii 3,4; 4Q512 42–44 ii). Thus, the metaphorical purification of God’s sprinkling waters leads to the possibility of resist-

18 The phrase “waters of purification” (*מי דוכי*) is not well attested in the Qumran Scrolls, appearing only here (and parallel manuscripts, 4Q255 2 4; 4Q257 3 13) and in a papyrus recording several rites of purification (4Q512 6 4), the latter of which is very fragmentary at this location. The word *דוכי* is unattested in biblical texts.

19 The Treatise (1QS 3:14–4:26) is an independent composition that likely predates the *Community Rule* and has been interpolated into some recensions of the *Rule*. For discussion of the issues and bibliography see Charlotte Hempel, “The *Treatise on the Two Spirits* and the Literary History of the *Rule of the Community*,” in *Dualism in Qumran* (ed. Géza Xeravits; LSTS 76; London: T & T Clark, 2010), 102–20.

ing evil, which then becomes the precondition for participating in the (presumably) *physical* ritual purification—an act of purity that is only valid for those who do not transgress divine instruction.²⁰ The dynamic interplay—the integration network—of water metaphors thus serves to express a larger set of ideas about the interpretation of scripture, the production of divine instruction (or “oracular speech”—see below), and the creation of social and sacred boundaries.

4. Waters That Blend—Complex Cognitive Metaphors and Performativity

According to Fauconnier and Turner, conceptual blends like the ones presented above often combine into complex blends that serve as the basis for how human cognition works. In these complex blends (or “megablends”) the product of one blend can serve as the input for another one, and these can be combined in innumerable ways as integration networks.²¹ The examples discussed here merely scratch the surface (to use another conceptual blend) of the myriad possibilities for understanding water metaphors in the Scrolls.

The foregoing discussion about Qumran water metaphors—while limited and selective—can now be understood in terms of a complex blend that provides a new framework for thinking about water in the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls. As Fauconnier and Turner amply demonstrate, there is conceivably no end to the manner in which the cognitive construction and combination of metaphors might serve to “translate” experience to language, which in turn provides the frames for interpreting and even shaping experience in ever new and complex ways.

The first input above—water as “well” (or spring or fountain) of Torah—can be combined with the second input of water as purifying medium to yield a complex blend in which “water” could serve as a vehicle for multiple levels of meaning in any given configuration. In this complex blend, the “correct” reading and internalization of Torah is tantamount to the condition of ritual purity, and both are requisite for full participation in the life of the community. Insight and understanding are available only to those who have submitted to the sect’s

20 It is at least somewhat clear from 4QMMT that ritual purification by water was operative not only at the level of metaphor or literary speech: in that document there are explicit instructions to ensure that the ritual is performed according to specifications for the “works of the Law” (4Q394 3–7 ii 17–19).

21 Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 279–98.

instruction, and ritual purity is available only to those who have insight and understanding. Ritual performances that incorporated either the physical substance of water or texts invoking water language could have activated or participated in this complex blend.

Eve Sweetser has related the cognitive linguistic theories of Fauconnier and Turner (along with those of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson) to the performative aspects of language use.²² According to Sweetser, blends do not exist only in the abstract at the cognitive level, but rather they “do” something more. She argues that “depictive utterances” are attempts to make one’s words correspond to the world, while “performative utterances” work the other way—to fashion a world to fit one’s words.²³ She writes about performative utterances: “The act of representation, by its performance, constitutes (or performs as a causal agent in) the structure of the represented space.”²⁴ This “space” is what Adam Seligman et al. have called the “subjunctive world” of ritual—an “as if” world that comes into being through the procedures of ritual and for the purpose of temporarily repairing the fractured world.²⁵

It is possible to take this approach to studying the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, for example, along with Judith Newman’s proposal that the *Songs* are tied to the thirteen weeks of the first quarter of the year and result in a kind of priestly prophecy.²⁶ In her essay “Priestly Prophets at Qumran,” Newman argues that the particular features of the language of the *Sabbath Songs* reflect “a progressive movement in litur-

22 Eve Sweetser, “Blended Spaces and Performativity,” *Cognitive Linguistics* 11 (2000): 305–33. For the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, see especially *Metaphors We Live By* (2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

23 Cf. S. Coulson and T. Oakley, “Blending Basics,” *Cognitive Linguistics* 11 (2000): 175–96, esp. 184–86.

24 Sweetser, “Blended Spaces,” 310.

25 Adam Seligman, et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. 17–42.

26 The question whether *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* is a “sectarian” text or not has been a subject of considerable debate, and depends to a large extent upon what is meant by the term “sectarian text.” See, for example, the discussion in Carol Newsom, “Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” *EDSS* 2:887–89. I assume here that the *Sabbath Songs*—whatever their provenance, which likely pre-dated the sectarian settlement at Qumran—were taken up for active use by the *Yahad*. For recent studies that attempt to nuance the discussion about “sectarian” vs. “non-sectarian,” see especially Florentino García Martínez, “Beyond the Sectarian Divide: The ‘Voice of the Teacher’ as Authority-Conferring Strategy in Some Qumran Texts,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts* (STDJ 92; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 227–44; idem, “¿Sectario, no-sectario, o qué? Problemas de una taxonomía correcta de los textos qumránicos,” *Revue de Qumran* 23/91 (2008): 383–94.

gical time, space, and energy.”²⁷ This movement culminates first in the renewal of the covenant tied to the festival of *Shavuot* and then in the “oracular performance” of the priestly participants who issue new prophetic speech—new “revelation” that comes from ritualized, “textual virtuosity.”

Newman imagines that what stands “behind” the *Songs* is a performance that was very real to its participants—a performance that was felt, seen, heard, and smelled. As Carol Newsom has stated,

the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice provides the means by which those who *read* and *heard* it could receive not merely communion with angels but a virtual experience of the presence in the heavenly temple among the angelic priests. Although there is no evidence that the document was restricted to members of the priesthood, the text readily may be understood as a means of enhancing the sense of priestly identity through its vivid description of the Israelite priesthood’s angelic counterparts.... Since the Qumran community considered the Jerusalem Temple to be polluted, the priestly members of the Qumran community could not participate in the sacrificial service.²⁸

There was, in other words, a rupture that ritual sought to overcome temporarily in the creation of a “subjunctive world.”

According to Seligman et al., “participants practicing ritual act as if the world produced in ritual were in fact a real one. And they do so fully conscious that such a subjunctive world exists in endless tension with an alternate world of daily existence.”²⁹ One might even say that ritual works to emphasize the tensions in the world of lived experience, and it does this in terms of a complex interaction with the metaphorical concepts embedded in language. To return to the trashcan basketball example, in this way ritual operates like play, which play theorists describe as “an activity in which one manipulates latent metalinguistic cues in order to construct an *as if* world.”³⁰

All this is to say that perhaps the performance of the *Sabbath Songs* was ritually performative in the sense outlined by Sweetser, namely that its use of a blended space for the performance itself was under-

27 Judith Newman, “Priestly Prophets at Qumran: Summoning Sinai through the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*,” in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. George Brooke, Hindy Najman, and Loren Stuckenbruck; Themes in Biblical Narrative 12; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 29–72, here 32.

28 “Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice,” *EDSS* 2:889

29 Seligman, et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences*, 25.

30 Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 159.

stood in some way to result in a temporary transformation of the reality in which the participants took part, and, if Newman is correct, also resulted in the utterance of prophetic speech that could orient the community anew in the “aftermath” of the covenant renewal. The ritual performance provided, in terms offered by Seligman et al., new mechanisms, new language, by which to navigate the return to the fractured world.

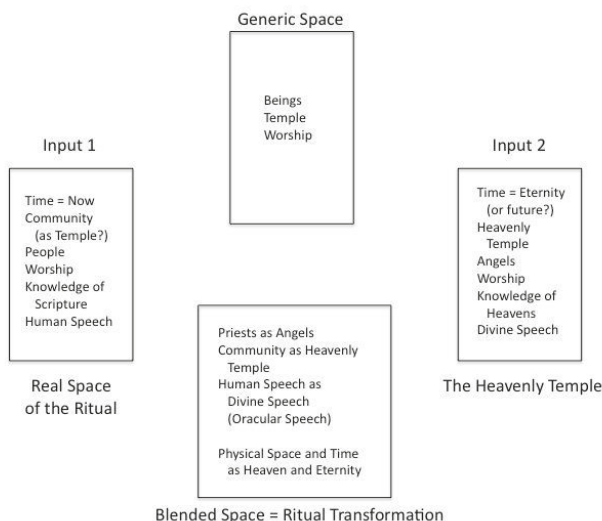


Figure 3

The “blend” in this case involves inputs both from the “real time” experience of the participants and from the “no-time” dimension of the heavenly temple. The community of human priests blends with the heavenly retinue of angelic priests; the human priestly knowledge of scripture (as a “well” or a “spring of living waters”) blends with the angelic awareness of heavenly realities; the community becomes a sanctified and pure temple, and human speech becomes divine speech.³¹ In the blend, the result may have been understood in terms of what Elliot Wolfson has called “ontic transformation” which implies not “becoming something new but rather actualizing the latent glory, the *kavod* the

31 Cf. 4Q174 1–2 i 1–19; CD 3:12–4:4; see also George J. Brooke, “Miqdash Adam, Eden, and the Qumran Community,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel: Community Without Temple* (ed. B. Ego, A. Lange, and P. Pilhofer; WUNT 118; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 285–301; Devorah Dimant, “4QFlorilegium and the Idea of the Community as Temple,” in *Hellenica et Judaica* (ed. A. Caquot; Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 165–89.

image of God (*s[elem 'elohim*) by which the true Adam was created, believed by the sectarians to be embodied in the perfect ones of Israel, that is, the priestly elite of the *yahad*.”³²

It may still be an open question whether perhaps the *Songs* were not only *uttered* but also enacted in some way. As Sweetser concludes, “ritual blends are cognitively strengthened, not only by multimodal involvement of the participants, but by the added realism gained from that involvement.”³³ The sectarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls likely did not inhabit a purely verbal or “textualized” mental world—indeed, such a thing is not in fact possible. Rather, it makes good sense to think that the sectarians were “multimodally involved” in a manner that informed the particular ways in which their conceptual blends took shape. As Newman writes, such multimodal involvement led to a complete ritual transformation:

As used at least during part of the history of the inhabitation of Qumran, the members of the *Yahad* were sufficiently purified during the course of the cycle so that by the seventh Sabbath, the congregation had become fully transformed from a group of embodied men to a symbolic *miqdash adam*, a sanctuary of men who understood themselves to have escaped the concerns of the flesh.³⁴

The *Sabbath Songs* hint at such a notion early in the cycle, in a passage on the first Sabbath in which the ambiguity between angelic beings and earthly priests can already be detected, and in which a water metaphor is at work:

... (God) inscribed His statutes for all spiritual creatures and [His glorious] judgments [for all who establish] knowledge, the people (who possess) His glorious insight, the godlike beings who draw near to knowledge. [...] eternal [...] and from the spring (מקור) of holiness of the sanctuaries of holiest [holiness ...] pries[ts of] the inner sanctum who serve before the King of holiest [holiness ...] of His glory. (4Q400 1 i 5–9)³⁵

32 Elliot Wolfson, “Seven Mysteries of Knowledge: Qumran E/Sotericism Recovered,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel* (ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman; JSJSup 83; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 177–214, here 197. Elsewhere Wolfson writes that “with the scriptural background in mind, one may conjecture that the priestly *literati* in the desert community placed at the center of their visionary landscape God’s knowledge, *da’at ‘elohim*, the ultimate object of imaginal representation and contemplative meditation” (203).

33 Sweetser, “Blended Spaces,” 329.

34 Newman, “Priestly Prophets,” 31.

35 Translation slightly modified from Carol Newsom, *The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Harvard Semitic Studies; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 93.

5. The Dangerous Vision of Water?

In light of all this, I would like to consider one final possibility concerning water in the Qumran Scrolls. In his book *A Transparent Illusion*, C. R. Morray-Jones calls attention to the function of water imagery in the throne-vision sequences of the later Jewish mystical texts *Hekhalot Rabbati* and *Zutarti*.³⁶ According to the relevant passages, one who “descends to the Chariot” must be wary of the “pure marble stones” that may look like “water” on the floor of the celestial temple; such “water” is a dangerous illusion that serves only to distract the visionary from the full presence of the deity, and such distraction results in instantaneous death. While one must avoid uncritical and anachronistic juxtapositions of texts from different corpora, the *Hekhalot* texts point to an intriguing possibility for “thinking about water” in the Qumran Scrolls.

Philip Alexander has carefully evaluated the terminology and themes in the “mystical texts” from Qumran—especially the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, parts of the *Hodayot* and *Community Rule*, and related texts—and compared them with the later *Hekhalot* literature.³⁷ In the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* one finds speculative traditions and practices arising from an exegetical-performative appropriation of the Merkavah vision in Ezek 1 (along with Exod 24, Isa 6, and other texts), in which the “dome” or “firmament” רָקִיעַ (cf. Gen 1:6, where the רָקִיעַ separates “waters above” from “waters below”) is re-envisioned as a “floor” מִדְרָס (4Q405 19 1–10; 11Q17 12–15 ii 1–10). It is this “floor” that in later mystical texts becomes the dangerous marble pavement resembling water.³⁸

36 C. R. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism* (JSJSup 59; Leiden: Brill, 2002); cf. idem “Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1–12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul’s Apostolate,” *HTR* 86 (1993): 117–217, 265–92.

37 Philip Alexander, *The Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (LSTS 61; London: T & T Clark, 2006); cf. my review of this book, Review of Biblical Literature [http://bookreviews.org] (2008). By discussing some of the Dead Sea Scrolls alongside the *Hekhalot* literature I do not suggest that there is a clear and unbroken continuity among them; this kind of synthesizing is, in my opinion, to be avoided; see for example Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004). Rather, it is possible to see that different Jewish groups took up the themes of heavenly speculation—and in some cases particular religious practices that supported such speculation—in ways that display both overlapping and distinct characteristics. See Newman’s apropos critique of such harmonizing tendencies in her “Priestly Prophets,” 30 n. 4, 32–33.

38 For *Hekhalot* texts and discussion see Morray-Jones, “Paradise Revisited,” 195–202; for the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* see Alexander, *The Mystical Texts*, 39. For the no-

Do the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* exhibit such “visions of water”? It does not appear that they do in an explicit way. However, it is interesting that the eleventh song of the cycle occurs on the day before the feast of *Shavuot*, which clearly was an important festival among the sectarians as it involved the renewal of the covenant and the ritual initiation of new members (1QS 5:8–9). It was associated with taking a binding oath to “return to the Torah of Moses” and to depart from those who may not participate in the “waters of purity” (1QS 5:13–14). According to Newman, *Shavuot* would have represented the point at which the *Sabbath Songs* began to culminate with the Ezekielian *kavod* and *merkavah* visions, in the aftermath of which the priests would issue new teachings in the form of oracular performances.³⁹ These, then, were waters not of death but of life.

6. Conclusion

The relationship between water—as substance and as metaphor—and knowledge was drawn out of the sectarian inhabitation of both a particular mental landscape as well as (at least for some) an intentionally separate one located in the desert wilderness. Water language was mobilized not simply as a literary trope in the creation of conceptual or ritual blends. It was also a means of constructing identity and boundaries, similar to what Newsom has called the “self-fashioning” of the *Yahad* as seen especially in the *Community Rule* and the *Hodayot*.⁴⁰ As such, it was an important part of the performative life of the community in more ways than have previously been registered.

This essay, while focused on water metaphors in the sectarian and closely related compositions, also outlines an integrative approach that can apply to other words, concepts, and ritual settings of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Cognitive linguistics and performative studies offer important models that can help to sort out the complex relationships between text, lived experience, and ritual—all of which together constituted the linguistic field from which the members of the *Yahad* and Damascus Covenant formulated their own new expressions. In at least some instances

tion of exegetical-performative appropriation (my own formulation), see Seth Sanders, “Performative Exegesis,” in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (SBLSymS 11; Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 57–79.

39 Newman, “Priestly Prophets,” 61–72.

40 Carol Newsom, *The Self As Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran* (STDJ 52; Leiden: Brill, 2004), esp. 77–190.

of “thinking about water,” these sectarians integrated textual, experiential, and ritual dimensions of water into fresh cognitive configurations.

The Fluid Boundaries of Life, the Universe and Yahweh

JAMES R. LINVILLE

Under heaven nothing is more soft and yielding than water.
Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better;
It has no equal.
The weak can overcome the strong;
The supple can overcome the stiff.
Under heaven everyone knows this,
Yet no one puts it into practice.¹

In the Tao Te Ching, water is a metaphor and symbol of the ineffable Tao, the unifying and underlying cosmic principle. Later Taoist religious expression, however, populated the heavens with a bureaucracy on the model of the Chinese imperial court. Against the boundlessly fluid and dynamic nature of the Tao was a more rigid, unyielding edifice built not on the patterns of nature but on society and authority.²

The result was a cosmology of polarity: on the one hand, the uninhibited freedom and suppleness of the Tao, on the other, the formal hierarchy of empire. It was a human society that produced the idea of Tao and the Taoist pantheon, only to relegate itself to a status dependent upon these creations. Berger and Luckman call this process "reification" which they describe as:

the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something other than human products—such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestation of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world, and, further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness.³

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- 1 *Tao Te Ching*, 78; Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, n.p. [cited 20 Jan 2013] Trans. by James Legge. The Internet Classics Archive: Web Atomics.
Online: <http://classics.mit.edu/Lao/taote.html>.
 - 2 I am grateful to John Harding of the University of Lethbridge for his assistance in understanding Taoism.
 - 3 Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Press, 1967), 106.

It is not my purpose in this essay to turn the Israelites into Taoists. Rather, I would like to play with the nature of the biblical deity as a reification of social and environmental realities, potentialities and necessities with the result being an ever-shifting, and multi-faceted set of portraits of the god. This collective always seems in the long run to wear down the foundation stones of academic theories about just what was going on in the minds of Yahweh's ancient creators.

Kurt Noll paraphrases Emile Durkheim and writes; "each Yahweh is a projection onto the heavens of a Yahwistic society."⁴ Many of these Yahwehs are given control of the weather and other natural phenomena, and so one might think that the reification of Judean society in the image of the god was an attempt to gain social control over nature. So what I also hope to illustrate today is how, in thinking about the polyvalence of water in the biblical literature, we might be able to think about ancient Judah's deity, and how thinking about the deity's portraits, something of that society's thoughts about water might become evident.

To do this, I think we have to first dislodge Yahweh from his throne over the flood (Ps. 29:10) to see something of what was involved in the process of hoisting him up there in the first place and foisting upon him the ambivalence, uncertainty and dynamic fluidity of life and the water that sustains it. As Claude Lévi-Strauss said about animals, water is "good to think with," as are gods.⁵ And to my mind, people tend to think with gods far more than they think about them.

Although the divine entity Elohim or Yahweh in the biblical text is cast as the master of the waters, the figure of the god does not really calm the stormy ocean of clashing images of water in the Bible. Rather than being the organizing principle to which the water is bound according to the logic of divine purpose and reason, the chaotic and sometimes-absent water becomes a metaphor for the instability and precariousness of the created order and of the deity itself.

Water is, of course, necessary for life, but like all good things, too much of it can lead one to drown in sorrows. Water might be cool and refreshing or brackish or poisonous. It is most commonly experienced as a formless liquid. It is hard to hold onto, but equally hard to get rid of once it has soaked one's crops or one's house or, I suppose, one's linen loincloth (Jer 13:1-6). And yet, water left to its own devices in a

4 K. L. Noll, "The Kaleidoscopic Nature of the Divine Personality in the Hebrew Bible," *BiblInt* 9 (2001): 1-24 (1).

5 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (trans. Rodney Needham. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 89.

bowl will mysteriously vanish. Conversely, one might wake to a field covered in morning dew. One portion of water can be poured into multiple smaller vessels and be reunited just as easily. But if the one body of water is then separated into different containers again, the water is unlikely to fall into exactly the same division of parts.

It is no wonder that water takes on so many diverse and seemingly contradictory values in religious thought. In structuralist terms, Wet implies its binary opposite Dry, and we might be inclined to see Yahweh being the mediating figure. Yet, water can be the mediator between God and Humanity, or God and Nature. In many mythologies, water represents the division between the realms of the living and the dead, and is a foundational element of the cosmos. To appropriate Victor Turner's vocabulary, water is liminal, it is not one thing or another.⁶ As such, it can transcend boundaries, invert itself, and signify life and signify death. It is part of humanity's world and part of the divine. It is transgressive, and so it is powerful.

Well known is the mingling of waters at the start of Enuma Elish.⁷ In Ugaritic mythology, El is enthroned above the two deeps, equated with the source of waters, while Baal's defeat of the Sea helps establish his dominion.⁸ Psalm 89 establishes the primacy of Yahweh among the divine council. Yahweh defeated the monster Rahab and rules the sea. The psalm transfers the divine control of the waters to David, whose hand is over "Sea and Rivers" (v. 26).

In psalms 96, 114, and 68 nature itself is sometimes portrayed as animate, active and conscious, capable of praising God. According to Ronald Simkins, the modern dichotomy between human and natural history should not be imposed on the ancient world. In biblical literature, the deity, nature and humanity are locked in a symbiotic relationship and mythic tropes like the "combat myth" deal with this symbiosis.⁹ In the divine hero's victory and enthronement, nature responds

6 Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure an Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1969), 95–6.

7 For Enuma Elish, see Stephanie Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 232.

8 See KTU 1.1 iii in Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilku and his Colleagues* (BiSe 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 52. Wyatt sees the "source of the waters" and "springs of the two deeps" as implying a similar reference to the center of the world as do the streams and rivers as in Gen 2:6, 10.

9 Ronald Simkins, *Yahweh's Activity in History and Nature in the Book of Joel* (Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 10; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 58–75; Ronald Simkins, "God, History, and the Natural World in the Book of Joel," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 435–52.

and provides the conditions for a prosperous human life. In another context, Hos 2:23–24 describes the re-establishment of this symbiosis with Yahweh answering the sky, which responds to the earth. The earth in turn brings forth its bounty and answers Jezreel, the place of human sins; the place of divine planting. Yahweh variously defeats and sports with great sea creatures, such as in Ps 74:14 in which the multi-headed Leviathan is crushed as Yahweh turns back the enemy Sea. The destruction of Leviathan is a future, and not primordial, event in Isa 27:1. Following the promise to destroy Leviathan Yahweh describes the Vineyard of Delight that he will water daily and guard jealously. Here the deity seems to be taking on the role of the first human in Eden.

The oscillation between primal and future events reflects the a-chronological or atemporal nature of some myths, they are always coming true, always a potentiality. I would relate this to the comment of Francis Landy, that all droughts are representative of the ideal drought.¹⁰ But more than just reflecting the short-term memory this may also reflect something of the nostalgia for origins, longing for ultimate significance that marks so much of human thought. Today's drought is *the* drought. This nostalgia and longing are empowering.

Significant in this regard are those biblical passages, such as Psalm 89 mentioned above, that appeal to a past act of the deity as a "historiola" or "magical antecedent" to affirm the reality of a similar act in the present or near future. It is a strategy well known in incantation texts. By relating a story of the deities conquering an illness, the mythic origins of a crisis, or even of the origins of the curative spell itself, the practitioner can master the situation.¹¹ Psalm 77 is an interesting example of this. Here the singer recalls the taunts and abuse he has received from his enemies, only to turn his memory to God's great acts in the past that include the redemption of Israel and the Exodus. In the process, we read how the waters fled from the god as the Deep, quaked and the clouds poured water. Clearly, this memory is intended to secure confidence in the singer's eventual salvation.

10 Landy made this comment in the workshop out of which this volume emerged.

11 David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of Magical Historiola in Ritual Spells," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (ed. Mavin W. Meyer and Paul Allan Mirecki; RGRW; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 457–76; David Frankfurter, "The Perils of Love: Magic and Counter Magic in Coptic Egypt" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10 (2001): 480–500, (485). A ritual metaphor or allusion recalls a structural relationship between two observed or imagined phenomena whose tension is resolved successfully. The speaker of the spell thus seeks to transfer this structural relationship with its positive outcome onto an open-ended or anxious situation in the real world.

But Psalm 77 is also instructive for how it combines mythic elements. The storm theophany of vv. 17–18 seems to reflect the common ANE Storm God motifs but there are also elements of the exodus myth, an event not placed in the primordial, ever present past, but in a temporal framework. The exodus, of course, certainly includes references to the defeat of water, with the crossing of the Sea of Reeds at its beginning and the Jordan at its conclusion. Between the two crossings are the great theophany of Sinai and the metaphorical creation of the Israelite people as God's own in a dry liminal wilderness separating two created orders, Egypt and Canaan. It is interesting, then, that the enigmatic offense of Moses in Num 20:1–13 was not that he produced food for the Israelites without affirming God's sanctity, but that he produced water.

Biblical water is sometimes a heavenly liquid, other times chthonic. God's spirit moves on primordial waters, and he divides it into upper and lower portions. Water flows from Eden, breaking into four rivers (Gen 2:6, 10), and it will flow from the future temple on Mt. Zion. In Ezek 47:1–12, water flows from under the structure and forms a swollen river that will purify the Dead Sea. Zechariah 14:8–9 has its own future myth of a stream flowing from Jerusalem after the eschatological battle when Yahweh will sit enthroned as king over the earth.

Water is a frequent metaphor and term of comparison for attributes of the divine or the working out of its will. In Isa 11:9's vision of the future, knowledge of God will cover the land as water covers the sea. Jeremiah 31:12 imagines a joyful future for Zion whose people celebrates the fruitful earth. Their lives are compared to a well-watered garden. A similar image appears in Isa 58:11. Hosea 6:3 establishes the reliability of Yahweh by referring to the spring rains. Not all of this imagery is so heart warming, of course. Numbers 5 uses water in a magical rite to reveal adultery (vv. 11–29). Isaiah 59:19 has an aggressive deity coming like a wind-driven stream. According to Psalm 93, Yahweh is more awe-inspiring than the sound of the oceans mighty breakers. Isaiah 28 has Yahweh acting as a hailstorm and a flood (vv. 17).

Against the creative and re-creative waters, the Flood myth erases creation. Gen 1 is undone as the waters above the firmament seem to pour in on creation through the heaven's floodgates while the lower waters of the great deep surge up through the ground. God's vow never to destroy the earth with water again (Gen 9:11) is sealed with a rainbow. Despite this reassurance, water clearly figures in the deity's continuing judgments. Jeremiah 47:2 imagines Philistia's enemy from the North as a raging torrent. Tyre, who imagined itself as a deity in the midst of the sea will be brought down to the pit, and will die in the sea.

(Ezek 28:2, 8). The employment of more or less cosmic imagery might be just poetic figures of speech, but it seems essential to the deity's very nature, and so I think one should find a deeper significance in many such references than simple hyperbole or literary flair. Amos 5:8 and 9:6 celebrate Yahweh as the deity who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them over the world. The language here is clearly mythological and the final reference comes after Amos' fifth vision set in what I think is meant to be the heavenly temple, the foundation of creation. Yahweh calls for its destruction and hence the dissolution of the world.¹²

It should be clear from this partial survey that water imagery is quite diverse in the Hebrew Bible, and I think it would be unusual in the history of religions to find an exception to that. It is clear that water plays a role in how some of the writers in the Hebrew Bible imagined the relationship between the people and the land, and the people and Yahweh. With creating and nurturing imagery contrasting with destructive theophanies, one might be inclined to regard the image of the deity as the factor that makes sense of all the watery variables. Clearly, in many of the passages, the reasons for why the deity is employing water for one purpose or another is made clear: it is a divine response to human sin or penitence. Yet, I think to be content with this solution would be superficial, as the deity itself is no less a literary figure, no less a creation of the writer than the water in these passages. The physical and figurative complexity of water is hardly more mysterious than the nature of the divine.

If we are to call water or any other aspect of nature into question, and to ask how or why an ancient people construed it as the property of a god, we should ask how and why they thought of their god the way they did. We simply can't take deities for granted. In adapting Berger and Luckman's terminology, the gods are at least in part reified aspects of constructed human life and the human relationship to the natural environment. As Psalm 89 suggests, Yahweh's reign as a god is closely related to the reign of the human king David. While the psalm puts Yahweh first, it is not hard to imagine that it was ancient human rulers who provided the model for how deities were imagined. The Israelite political theology is simply a version of that common strategy of political legitimization.

But such an ideology is fraught with danger. Even if it was meant to affirm control and order over the universe, experience would have

12 James R. Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination* (SOTSMS; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 158–59.

taught that sometimes the rains and rivers simply did not flow in the right amounts at the right times. We should ask how separate Yahweh was from the natural phenomena the Bible describes him as controlling. How far back do we read modern doctrines of transcendence, and how rigidly do we apply it? On rare occasions Yahweh is all wet. In Jer 2:13, the deity declares himself to be the fountain of living water abandoned by his people who prefer to hew out broken cisterns for themselves. In Jer 17:13 Yahweh is again so described in a passage that celebrates his shrine and throne. And we should also ask how, if he controlled the vagaries of weather, or even was the weather on some level, one might control him?

As noted above, there is strong association between Yahweh's temple and water, especially in future visions. Eden itself is bounded by water and Psalm 29 has God's voice thunder over the waters as the god is enthroned over the flood. To my mind, we may do well to refrain from sharply delineating between the figure of the deity in the Bible and the phenomena which the text portrays as emanating from or being associated with him and extending into the natural world. Obviously, I am not suggesting that an ancient Judean would have regarded any body of water as Yahweh on what we might call a literal level, but as a symbol water could in some ways partake of the divine essence. How strong that association would have been may have depended on how badly the poor fellow needed or feared that water. Modern thought is careful to delineate between "myth" and "history," figurative and literal, or natural and supernatural.¹³ We should not assume that identical distinctions were part of ancient Judah's religious thought.

Bob Becking's essay in this volume observes that Persian period Yehud community had pressing social and environmental issues and in regards to Nehemiah 5, a reformulation of economic policies were seen as a proper response to the problem financial exploitation exasperated by a drought. In Haggai 1, a drought brought calls for demands for the temple construction. The process of maintaining the sacred, inviolable foundations of a group's identity is dynamic.¹⁴ William Paden writes that the "polarity of order and violation is indeed a version of the more generic, cognitive distinction of system/anti-system found in all social and natural life."¹⁵ Jonathan Z. Smith's famous anecdote from his employment on a farm reveals that the ascription of some part of life to the

13 Douglass Price Williams, "In Search of Mythopoeic Thought," *Ethos* 27 (1999): 25–32.

14 William E. Paden, "Sacred Order," *MTSR* 12 (2000): 207–55.

15 Paden, "Sacred Order," 208.

system or the anti-system is a flexible process. He noticed how his employer would scrupulously wash the dirt off his hands when he came home in the evening, but then began his next working day by rubbing "earth" into his hands. Outside of the house, the "earth" is in its proper place and, as such, is in its "sacred" position. Yet is it "profane" and transgressive when dragged in on one's shoes or left clinging to one's hands.¹⁶ Certainly water has the same polarity in the minds of the biblical writers. Water in proper places and amounts is part of the socially constructed sacred order: it affirms basic survival and social integrity. Water can purify other things and people, re-integrating them into the sacred order after a violation of impurity. Yet, water can be out of place; there can be too much or too little, or water of the wrong and dangerous sort. In these respects, it is assimilated to the violating, "profane" world and efforts, however symbolic, must be made to contain or control it.

But what do we do when the deity himself violates the order, and threatens the territory, the society and its members? Books like Qoheleth and Job indicate that the ancient Israelites could not always construe calamity as the result of divine judgment on human violations. Rather, having produced the image of Yahweh as provider and judge of humanity, they are left with a deity that at times seems to act arbitrarily and anti-socially: in Paden's terms, "profanely." Since the deity is created as the power behind nature, attempts to control nature are then attempts to influence or control the deity by bringing him back into the fold. Of course manipulating the physical environment to provide water is not always a "religious," "magical," or "ritual" process. Digging a well technically requires only some physical tools and a lot of hard work, as doubtlessly those who dug the Siloam tunnel into Jerusalem also found out. Yet, along with what we might call "secular" approaches to water management was the reified projection of water as a sacred entity.

Scholars in the 19th and early 20th century frequently (but not always) made distinctions between the "irrational" thought of those they called "primitive" and the "rational" thought of modern humanity as they had strong ethnocentric biases and sometimes a disdain for religion itself.¹⁷ Yet, it was soon realized that those with only low levels of

16 Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 291.

17 William E. Paden, *Interpreting the Sacred* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 15–8; Daniel L. Pals, "Intellect" in *Guide to the Study of Religion* (ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London: Cassell, 2000), 155–67.

technology and material culture were fully capable of rational, logical thought but would freely mix this with “magical” or “religious” actions to produce such things as building projects and to assimilating them to the spiritual world. The practical must be made a cosmic or sacred entity to make it fit for human use, that is, socialized through ritual assimilation to sacred order.¹⁸ Thus, even today, observant and sometimes not-so-observant Jews still grace their new homes with a mezuzah while secular people often “initiate” their new abodes into their accepted social order with an initiatory celebration, sometimes with copious “libations” being poured out. Dedications of great public buildings often appeal to foundational events in community history, or the proud character of the society. The tendency to ritually or religiously turn the accidental or new or anomalous into the social hence the “sacred order,” remains powerful and we should not see ancient Judeans as exceptions to the rule.

We can see an example of this in the locust plague, drought and famine described in Joel. As Ehud Ben Zvi has observed in his contribution to this workshop, the unnatural combination of drought and locust infestation only adds to the uncanniness of the scene. I also find the call for public lament and to “sanctify” a fast in Joel 1:14 and 2:15 rather mysterious. Rather than simply seeing it as a demand for public display of anguish, I view it as an attempt to assimilate the effect of the disaster into the social and sacred orders. As I wrote elsewhere:

But what is the point of communal lamentation? Are the people not already in anguish? And by what perverse irony are the people asked to fast? Are they not already starving?¹⁹

According to Catherine Bell, ritualization is the affirmation of social power. Under the guise of a seeming logical response to a problem, ritual redefines the issue at hand by imposing an unconscious scheme of social behaviour and values and construing the ultimate authority as resting in the tradition or the deity. Social reintegration is then necessary to personal and cosmic reconstitution.²⁰ Ritual not only re-

18 This is well documented, but see, for instance, Sam D. Gill, *Beyond the Primitive: The Religions of Nonliterate People* (Prentice Hall Series in World Religions; Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1982), 12–3, 46–50.

19 James R. Linville, “The Day of Yahweh and the Mourning of the Priests in Joel,” in *The Priests in the Prophets: The Portrayal of Priests, Prophets, and Other Religious Specialists in the Latter Prophets* (ed. L. L. Grabbe and A. Ogden Bellis; JSOTSup 408. London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 98–114.

20 Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 98–100, 108–16, 197–223.

integrates its human members as a collective but its gods, too. Indeed, if the gods are projections or reifications of society, their presence is necessary. In Joel's fasting response to famine, a collective scheme is imposed on suffering in which even the god who controls the weather and fortunes of the people is redefined. He is called to the assembly too, with the warning that he will earn the mocking of the nations if he does not perform his own social functions and end the suffering. Oswald Loretz's thesis that Joel is a much redacted text originally concerning rain ritual may or may not be correct.²¹ But I think it is clear that the current book of Joel accesses the belief that ritual (and perhaps the quasi-ritual of simply reading a religious text) can influence Yahweh, and hence, the weather, by bringing both into the sacralizing sphere of collective identity. One might think the same about many of the other texts about water and Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible.

Gods and pantheons are rather more complex than some scholars have allowed. A number of researchers are now arguing that categories once taken for granted such as monotheism and polytheism need to be rethought. Barbara Nevling Porter writes that "the difference between the monotheistic, and polytheistic conception of divinity as one or many rests to a large extent on the participants definitions of deity" but monotheism does not, in her opinion, result in a "serious depopulation of the divine sphere."²² A number of scholars have recognized in the ancient Near East, a unifying principle that linked all of the gods into a singular divine power or cosmic order. Others, however, have urged caution.²³ John Baines tries to mediate between the position of Eric Hornung, who sees Egyptian religion as essentially monotheistic throughout its history, and that of Jan Assmann who finds that in the Middle Kingdom a higher order of existence manifested itself in the various deities and cosmos. Baines writes that in Egypt there appears to have been variability in understanding the independence of deities. He provides the example of the 18th Dynasty "Leiden Hymn" in which all the gods are said to be Amun, Re and Ptah, who are then referred to with a singular pronoun, a strategy Baines calls a "motivating para-

21 O. Loretz, *Regenritual und Jahwetag im Joelbuch: Kanaanäischer Hintergrund, Kolometrie, Aufbau und Symbolik eines Prophetenbuches* (UBL 4; Altenberge: CIS-Verlag, 1986).

22 Barbara N. Porter, "One God or Many? A Brief Introduction to a Complex Problem," in *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* (ed. Barbara Nevling Porter; Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute 1; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2000), 1-8 (2).

23 Porter, "One God or Many," 4-5.

dox.”²⁴ Porter comments on the views of H. W. F. Saggs concerning the small number of Assyrian texts that apparently show “incipient monotheism,” i.e., that Assyria’s pantheon were manifestations of a divine unity, before turning to refute Simo Parpola’s more sweeping claim that Assyrian religion was essentially monotheistic. Even so, she detects an anxiety concerning multiplicity of deities and an attraction toward the notion of a singular deity, even if the Assyrians never produced monotheism.²⁵ As noted above, the question of what a “god” is matters. She writes:

An Assyrian *ilu*, in short, was not a “god” in our sense, but a set of related but not completely congruent phenomena and qualities, only one of which was imagined as a divine person. Including in itself this array of aspects a Mesopotamian *ilu* (and its Assyrian counterpart) thus had a greater fluidity of manifestation and greater potential for identification with other *ilus* who shared similar qualities or powers than the more strongly personified—and thus bounded—God of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, or than the anthropomorphically conceived gods of Greek Mythology.²⁶

I would suggest, however, that sharply bounded the deities of the so-called “Western monotheisms” can, at times, be somewhat amorphous

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- 24 John Baines, “Egyptian Deities in Context: Multiplicity, Unity, and the Problem of Change,” in *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* (ed. Barbara Nevling Porter; Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 1; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2000), 9–78 (54–57), referring to, among other works, Eric Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (trans. John Baines; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), and Jan Assmann, “Primat und Transzendenz: Struktur und Genese der ägyptischen Vorstellung eines ‘Höchsten Wesens’,” in *Aspekte der spätägyptischen Religion* (ed. Wohlfahrt Westendorf; Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 1979), 7–42.
- 25 Barbara N. Porter, “The Anxiety of Multiplicity: Concepts of Divinity as One and Many in Ancient Assyria,” in *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* (ed. Barbara Nevling Porter; Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 1; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2000), 211–71, referring to H. W. F. Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984), 204, and Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997). She describes Parpola’s thesis that Assyrian religion was monotheistic and comparable to Christian trinitarian thought. Assur possesses both transcendent and immanent qualities and in some personal names Assur is equated with “all the gods.” Parpola argues for his position in the same volume as Porter’s paper appears: Simo Parpola, “Monotheism in Ancient Assyria,” in *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* (ed. Barbara Nevling Porter; Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 1; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2000), 165–209. A lengthy critique of Parpola’s thesis has been published by Jerrod Cooper, “Assyrian Prophecies, the Assyrian Tree, and the Mesopotamian Origins of Jewish Monotheism, Greek Philosophy, Christian Theology, Gnosticism, and Much More,” *JAOS* 120 (2000): 430–44.
- 26 Porter, “Anxiety of Multiplicity,” 247–48.

or depersonalized, and that the doctrinal transcendence of these traditions' deities should not be read into formative period of Israelite worship of Yahweh / Elohim. To my mind, categories like monotheism and polytheism are often rhetorical constructs, either of practitioners of one religious system or another to differentiate themselves from others, or of scholars attempting to systematize and simplify an intractable amount of data.

As is well known, myths do not exist in isolation but in webs of mythology, or perhaps better, webs of historically contingent mythological, political, and ideological discourses shaped by conventional but malleable genres of oral and written tradition, and memory creation. In these matrices, the gods and their interactions with nature or humanity can hardly be expected to be rigid and stable, as they are abstract products of the vagaries of human history and thought.

In a paper on the Ugaritic conception of Baal's control of the weather, Steve Wiggins argues that mythological figures may have some characteristic traits or a "personality signature" but the Ugaritic deities do not fall into rigid categories of functions. And so Baal is typically associated with storms and the weather, but his career is not restricted to that of the Storm-God. Wiggins finds that Baal has both positive and negative aspects to his control over weather. He can, if he so decides, send the rain at the appropriate time. He also seems to have control over ground water as well. When angered, Baal will wield his weapons of lightening and thunder. Conversely, when Baal is absent drought ensues. Yet, Baal is not concerned entirely with the weather. Wiggins notes that the weather plays little role in his fight with Yamm.²⁷

In sympathy with Wiggins' warning about Baal, one should resist attempts to harmonize and systematize the biblical deity. Yahweh controls the storms but he is not exclusively a storm god. He controls fertility but that does not exhaust him, either. He sits enthroned over the cosmos like El, and is also thought of as a god of the ancestors. I do not think we should hold these different roles to be the result solely of different schools of thought although this certainly will play into it. Biblical Yahweh/Elohim reflects many long established modes of thinking about deities in the ancient Near East, but in new combinations and new interrelationships and with new myths and new versions of old ones. Changing environmental and social realities can change the nature of the deity. The religion of many Judeans may have been mono-

27 Steve A. Wiggins, "The Weather under Baal: Meteorology in KTU 11-6" *UF* 32 (2000): 577-98. Wiggins argues that Baal's absence brings an unseasonal drought, and does not reflect the annual dry season.

theistic but it was hardly monolithic. If their deity was a reification of numerous aspects of perceived reality then the god must be something like shapeless and enigmatic water, dividing and recombining as the circumstances dictated. In his study of "The Kaleidoscopic Nature of the Divine Personality in the Hebrew Bible" Kurt Noll writes that the Bible's "many Yahwehs were never meant to be harmonized; they were not 'one' at all."²⁸ A little later he adds, "The Yahwehs of the Bible perform the roles required by the particular literature in which they are found. Job's deity cannot be Deuteronomy's Yahweh because the genres of the two scrolls differ significantly."²⁹

Gods and their actions are situational and fluid, taking the shape of the container one puts them in. As noted, water is closely related to creation. Yet its role in the priestly account differs from its role in the Garden of Eden narrative. Likewise, in Proverbs 8, rather than being a primordial substance, its presence is secondary, Lady Wisdom was there first. The reference to creation in Job 26 tells of the defeat of Rahab. In each of these contexts the deity, and not just his actions differ. The god changes with the nature of the story being told about him. In many ways rather than explaining away the shifts in Yahweh's personality from, say, nurturer to murderer, or from careful gardener to the one who floods the earth, by appealing to moralizing logic of divine judgment and mercy we might see at least some levels of ancient thought content with the deity as a paradox, a study of opposites, a projection of relationship between opposites, and not one thing or another. Certainly this is not beyond the capacity of the religious imagination.

Those familiar with Hinduism know of the paradox that is Shiva, who may be portrayed as half male, half female, a loving husband, and starving ascetic.³⁰ In his presentation to this workshop, Reinhard Müller commented on the late third millennium composite image from Mesopotamia in which a whip-swinging god is combined with an image of a dragon representing a thunderstorm and a goddess holding streams in her hands. Rivkah Harris describes Ishtar-Inanna as a paradox and coincidence of opposites who transcended her own polarities and contraries. She represented order and disorder, structure and anti-structure. In her psychological traits and behavior she confounded and confused normative categories and boundaries and thereby defined

28 Noll, "Kaleidoscopic Nature," 22.

29 Ibid., 23.

30 Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 4-6.

and protected the norms and underlying structure of Mesopotamian civilization. She is maternal and lustful, dutiful and violent, hypersexual and virgin. The goddess's contradictions are carnivalesque, but as Harris notes, this creative negation of typical social norms with its ritualized obscenity preserved a vitality and ultimately reinforced those very norms.³¹

The biblical God is a complex character. He is the object of devotional poetry extolling his loving kindness but he is also the terrible, vengeful god who has left thousands butchered in the streets of many towns and cities. He promises salvation and reduces mothers to cannibalism (Jer. 19:9). He creates the world and destroys it. Indeed, in Isaiah, he creates light and darkness, "peace" and "evil" (Isa 45:7). He leads the psalmist safely through the valley of the shadow of death (Ps 23), and yet, for a few dozen agonizing chapters, seems to abandon righteous Job there.

Rivkah Harris ends her essay on Ishtar with a long quote by Clifford Geertz's classic *Religion as a Cultural System* in which he discusses how the pain that accompanies human existence raises "the uncomfortable suspicion that perhaps the world, and hence man's life in the world, has no genuine order at all—no empirical regularity, no emotional form, no moral coherence."³² Geertz finds that the response to this is the creation of a symbolic order in which the apparent nonsensical and troubling nature of human experience can be rendered comprehensible. Geertz even suggests that this response can even celebrate the world's ambivalence.³³ But Harris perhaps ends her quotation of Geertz too soon. He continues:

The effort [to create a symbolic order] is not to deny the undeniable—that there are unexplained events, that life hurts, or that rain falls upon the just—but to deny that there are inexplicable events, that life is unendurable, and that justice is a mirage.³⁴

One might want to add that once the created symbolic order is in place, a new process begins, that of denying that its own key elements, including gods, are but mirages, illusion of oases in the desert. Perhaps

31 Rivkah Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites," *History of Religions* 30 (1991): 261–78 (263).

32 Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar," 278, citing Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach* (3d ed.; ed. W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt; New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 173.

33 Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 107–8.

34 Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 108.

the ever-malleable water is the most fitting symbol of the biblical deity of all.

Although religions often portray themselves as conservative, timeless structures, they are constantly innovating to a greater or lesser extent. Pantheons change and the roles deities play can change as well. It is sometimes said that one cannot step in the same river twice since they are always changing. By the same token, and regardless of the claims of Heb 13:8 about unwavering nature of Christ, I wonder if one can really encounter the same god twice. In her essay in this volume Sonya Kostamo quotes Marc Brettler concerning Isaiah 40–66's innovative use of old metaphors for the divine and hence created a new god. Though out the biblical corpus, water is a significant mode of thinking about and recreating this deity, even as Yahweh himself represents a significant mode for thinking about water. Both are integrative, both are transgressive, and both must be controlled through a complex symbolic construction. Yet, we know that full control can never be won. Leviathan has been defeated; we are told, only to give us confidence that he will be overthrown again—or is it the anxiety that perhaps one day the serpent will win? And so the rivers flow to the sea and back again. And with that, and in good biblical fashion, I will end where I began, in defiance of Psalm 18's depiction of Yahweh as a rock.

Under heaven nothing is more soft and yielding than water.
Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better;
It has no equal.
(Tao Te Ching 78)

Drawing Out Moses: Water as a Personal Motif of the Biblical Character

PETER SABO

Moses, perhaps more than any other biblical character, is intimately associated with water.¹ It plays an important role in his birth story, and also, in an odd and oblique way, his premature death. In between, water shows up at important stages in his life: his chance meeting with the seven Midianite daughters at a well, his encounters with Pharaoh on the Nile, the parting of the Suph-Sea, and his search to provide water for the Israelites in the desert. A web of thematic and linguistic ties links these episodes together.

What does it mean to link a literary character so closely to water? Specifically, what does it mean for the characterization of Moses? In what ways are the connections made between each of these separate water episodes, and what do these connections symbolize? I will explore these questions in this paper and read them in light of a broader interpretation of the role that Moses plays in the triangular relationship of Israel-Moses-God.²

When used symbolically in the Hebrew Bible, water can refer to a vast array of concepts and things: birth, death (and destruction), cleansing, judgment, fluidity, formlessness, and reflectivity.³ In the beginning

1 See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 57–58; idem, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), 316.

2 This essay owes much to Ilana Pardes's *The Biography of Ancient Israel: National Narratives in the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). As the title suggests, Pardes reads the narrative of the Pentateuch as a biography of Israel and she follows this biography from the nation's birth, growth and nurturing, maturity, and beyond. Besides the nation of Israel, the other primary character that Pardes focuses on is God. The relation between the two is primarily that of father to son. Pardes astutely notes though that the biography of the nation is intimately connected with other character's individual histories, and the most obvious and prominent of these is Moses.' This attentiveness to the interrelation between individual and collective histories is indebted to Freud. I have a similar indebtedness to Freud, Freudian thought, and psychoanalysis in this paper, as the reader may notice.

3 See Philippe Reymond, *L'eau, Sa Vie, et Sa Signification dans L'ancien Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), who concludes that water's primary function in the Hebrew Bible is its use as symbol. See also Clements and Fabray, "מים" *TDOT* 8:265–88.

chapters of Exodus, and the narrative surrounding Moses, the most prominent of these symbols are birth and death. There is a strong connection between the thematic imagery of water surrounding the Israelites and that surrounding Moses. These connections are not always straightforward though, and are evidence of the complex issues of identity and characterization of both Moses and Israel. In the wilderness narratives in Exod 15:22–26, 17:1–7 and Num 20:1–13, water becomes a primary object of desire, essential for survival and a sense of home.

1. Beginnings

Exodus begins by recounting the history of Israel in Egypt in language reminiscent of the creation and flood stories in Genesis: “And the sons of Israel bore fruit and swarmed and multiplied and proliferated greatly, greatly, and the land was full of them” (1:7).⁴ By alluding to the creation and flood, the text hints that the events of Exodus represent a new beginning, as momentous as these primordial acts. The propagation of the Israelites is a fulfillment of the commands in the creation and flood episodes; imperatives in Genesis are replaced by perfects in Exodus. In other words, the Exodus narrative re-interprets these primordial events and applies them to “historic, human time.”⁵ It is not without significance that water plays an important role in the creation and flood, displaying its range from chaotic substance to birthing fluid to a medium of destruction.⁶

4 See Gen 1:28: “Be fruitful (פֶּרִי) and multiply (רִבּוּ)...” and God’s command post-deluge to “be fruitful (פֶּרִי) and multiply (רִבּוּ) and swarm (שָׂרָצוּ)...” 9:7, see also 9:1. Exodus 1:7 alludes to both creation and flood by combining terminology specific to both texts: “And the sons of Israel bore fruit (פֶּרִי) and swarmed (וַיִּשְׂרָצוּ) and multiplied (וַיִּרְבּוּ)...” (Translations are my own, unless otherwise cited.)

5 See William H. C. Propp, *Exodus* 1–18 (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 560. Propp makes these observations while discussing the crossing of the Suph-Sea, but the beginning of this motif (that is, the allusion to primordial events which are re-interpreted by the Exodus story) begins here. Propp contrasts the historic, human time of Exodus to the “primordial, mythic time” of the Genesis stories. This does not mean that Exodus is to be understood as “historic,” but only to show the difference in how the two narratives are best understood.

6 That water plays a central role in the biblical flood story goes without saying. However, it is more difficult to discern the role of water in the biblical creation accounts. In the Priestly account the primeval ocean appears not to have entirely lost its mythological character as a cosmic power. Granted, it is not vested with the personal qualities of will and intelligence, but it is considered a primordial substance and is the subject of special divine action (as in days 3 and 5).

The Exodus narrative also interacts with a variety of themes that can be found in common ancient Near Eastern literature. Israel's rapidly increasing population, for instance, alludes to the overpopulation motif, in which human reproduction swerves out of control; there follows an attempt to suppress this over-production, though it is often thwarted or at least not fully successful.⁷ Accordingly, the focus on Israel's prodigious fertility implies that a threat is at hand, one both to Egypt and Israel.⁸ Pharaoh (and Egypt by extension) plays the role of suppressor in this particular text: "And [Pharaoh] said to his people: 'Behold, the people of the sons of Israel is greater and mightier than we. Let us deal shrewdly with him, lest he multiply...' (Exod 1:9). Pharaoh sets forced-labor foremen over the Israelites, but yet, "as they abused him [Israel], so he multiplied and burst out, and they came to dread the Israelites" (1:12). This leads Pharaoh to instruct two "Hebrew midwives" (מילדת העבריות) to kill the new-born sons of the Israelites. Again, Pharaoh's scheming fails, as the Hebrew midwives perform some trickery of their own in order to let the boys live. When Pharaoh confronts them with their lack of obedience they explain: "The Hebrew women are not at all like the Egyptian woman, but they are lively (חיה). Before the midwife comes to them, they bear" (1:19).⁹ The Israelites owe their survival and fecundity to the righteous deeds of two female saviours.

There is a tendency to interpret למילדת העבריות to mean "to midwives of the Hebrew women," thereby making the characters into righteous foreigners. Textually, this may be done, following LXX and Josephus, by reading למילדת instead of למילדת.¹⁰ This emendation probably stems

It is not until the Suph-Sea narrative, however, that the reader encounters a more explicit *Chaoskampf* motif. This is not without significance in itself though. It implies that creation is not complete until God's reign on earth commences at Sinai. See Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 560–61.

- 7 The ancient Near Eastern text in which this motif is most apparent is *The Epic of Atrahasis*. In the epic, humanity is created as a substitute labour force. However, humans are so fecund and active that the god Enlil is repeatedly disturbed by them. After a variety of failed attempts to curb this fecundity (plague and drought), Enlil finally decides to send a deluge. But Ea, another important deity, thwarts this plan by secretly advising the human Atrahasis to build a boat of reed and pitch.
- 8 The command to bear fruit and multiply in Gen 1:28 is followed by the commands to "fill the land and subdue it." A similar mandate is repeated after the flood: "Bear fruit and multiply and fill the land; the fear and dread of you will be upon every creature of the land" (Gen 9:1–2).
- 9 The narrator then explains that God blessed the midwives, and also hammers out the point: "and the people multiplied and proliferated greatly" (1:20), again echoing the creation and flood stories.
- 10 See Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (New York: Behrman House, 1969), 26–7. Other textual readings suggest that there is an elliptical אַח missing before העבריות.

from the “unlikely” fact that Pharaoh would order midwives to commit genocide against their own people. Nonetheless, the weight of the argument falls in favour of keeping the MT as it is, especially considering that the woman’s names are Semitic.¹¹ However, the ambiguity may also be purposeful. There are other “foreign women” acting as saviour figures in the opening chapters of Exodus: Pharaoh’s daughter, her maid-servant, and Zipporah, for example.¹² That Egyptian women might act as redeemable, even saviour-like characters, is evidence that reads against the dominant voice of the text which characterizes Egypt as villainous.¹³ Moreover, one wonders if all of this serves as foreshadowing of another Egyptian/Hebrew saviour (and, in a way, midwife) for Israel—Moses.¹⁴

11 But as Greenberg notes, the Semitic origin of the characters names is not a fatal obstacle to the hypothesis that the midwives are Egyptian. Hagar, for example, is an Egyptian maid with a name that has a Semitic ring (*Understanding Exodus*, 27).

12 For an overview of the “female saviour” motif in the opening chapters of Exodus, see Ilana Pardes, *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 81–83.

13 Indeed, an important counter-voice in the Pentateuchal narrative, largely presented by the voice of personified Israel itself, paints Egypt not as a place of servitude, but of near-paradisiacal features. Pardes (*Biography of Ancient Israel*, 33), from a psycho-analytical viewpoint, understands Egypt as the womb which Israel is born out of, and thus a permanent connection is made between the two nations. This hypothesis will be explored further below.

14 While the biblical text makes clear that Moses is a Hebrew, there is no doubt that it forever links him to Egypt as well (and also further complicates this with his connection to Midian). He is raised by an Egyptian, and is interestingly referred to by the daughters of Reuel (Jethro) as an Egyptian (2:19). Of course, the plain sense of the text is that in manner, speak, and custom Moses appears to the daughters, on first impression, as an Egyptian. Yet, the line does provide the reader with a unique insight into the influence of Egypt upon Moses.

Moreover, Moses’ connection to Egypt was, as is well known, of crucial importance to Sigmund Freud (See *Moses and Monotheism* [trans. Katherine Jones; New York: Vintage Books, 1967]). So much so that Freud argued Moses (or at least the first Moses) actually was Egyptian. The biblical text necessarily distorts this “historical truth,” and yet one can find traces of it in the text. (Interestingly, of all the evidence Freud cites, he never once mentions Exod 2:19!) Of course, Freud’s overall argument offers little to the biblical scholar. However, the method of Freud’s investigation has been underappreciated. His investigation dealt with the psychological structures of a text, with what a text manifestly presents, and with what it latently attempts to hide, and yet cannot fully do so. In this manner, he was a deconstructionist, a strong reader of the text that exposed its fissures and inevitable contradictions. Even more important is Freud’s interactions with memory—both collective and individual—and its dynamic preservation. Jan Assmann in his book, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997) brilliantly shows how Freud’s method applies to Moses and his connection with Egypt. Assmann explores a long line of tradition, from the

2. The Birth of Moses

Pharaoh's next plan, to throw the Hebrew sons into the Nile, is one that deals directly with Moses. One finds the continuation of themes that have been developed in the first chapter: effort to prevent birth of males (and consequent circumvention of this attempt), female saviour(s), and allusions to primordial events that connect with water. These themes, along with a variety of linguistic connections, repeat themselves throughout the opening chapters of Exodus and create an interesting web of allusions and foreshadowing. For example, the echoing of the creation and flood stories is also repeated in the story of Moses' birth. The statement that Moses' mother conceived, gave birth, and "saw that he was good," echoes Genesis 1. And the placement of Moses in an ark (תבה) echoes the flood story, the only other place in the Hebrew Bible where this term is used.

The theme of shrewd female saviours is presented as well. Moses' mother cleverly reinterprets Pharaoh's command to throw the male infants into the Nile by gently placing Moses in it. Then Moses' sister keeps a watchful eye over Moses, in order to see what happens to him. Finally, Pharaoh's own daughter ignores her father's command and takes pity on the crying infant when she finds him in the river.¹⁵

likes of Manetho, Strabo, John Spencer and eventually to Freud himself, all of which assert Moses to be an Egyptian. Assmann is not concerned with history *per se* then, but with "mnemohistory," the history of (a) memory.

What has perhaps been overlooked, by Assmann and others, is the extent to which this memory is played with in the biblical text itself. Freud himself actually played much closer attention to the biblical text than is often given credit. However, his choice of evidence in what constituted the traces of Moses' connection to Egypt, as I have already alluded to, was far from perfect (one thinks of his adherence to Ernst Sellin's hypothesis that the book of Hosea actually asserts that Moses was killed by the Israelites in the wilderness). See Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991); Théo Pfrimmer, *Freud: Lecteur de la Bible* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982).

- 15 One might add to the list the maidservant of Pharaoh's daughter, who is the one who actually goes into the Nile and saves Moses, having been commanded to do so. This is perhaps foreshadowing of the combination of master and servant saving an infant that we will see in the crossing of the Suph-Sea, which I will explore further below.

It is also noteworthy that Pharaoh's daughter is mentioned as going out to the Nile to bathe (2:5). Water is, of course, closely intertwined in the Hebrew Bible with symbols for washing, both physically and spiritually (e.g., Gen 6:11–12; Exod 29:4; 2 Kgs 5; Mic 7:19, etc.). Once again this minor feature of Moses' birth story may be explained as a possible allusion to the crossing of the Suph-Sea where the Israelites metaphorically wash off their slavery and thereby prepare themselves for Sinai for which they must be ritually pure.

The allusions in Moses' birth story go beyond the primordial events in Genesis and the narrative of Exodus, as the folkloric tale is one of the many examples of the birth of a hero myth. The following structures are usually found in this myth: a child of illustrious lineage is put in danger and is abandoned by its biological parents (either willingly or unwillingly); the child is then raised in obscurity by foster parents only to eventually come into its own.¹⁶ A common feature of the abandoned hero tale is the placement of the child in a vessel set afloat on a river, or another body of water. Thus, the vast majority of these tales are also linked to flood myths in which the hero is saved from the destructive waters by a floating device. In the *Epic of Atrahasis*, for example, Atrahasis builds a boat of reed and pitch to save him and his family (Noah, of course, acts similarly in the flood story of Genesis).

Otto Rank interprets the floating vessel as a maternal, womb-like container and asserts that the river represents amniotic fluid. The exit from the floating device, therefore, is a metaphorical birth, even a rebirth.¹⁷ As Propp observes this interpretation is supported, to an extent, by the Hammurabi Code which speaks of adopting a son "from his water," which presumably means "from birth."¹⁸ Water is not only a medium of destruction then, but also a protecting, life giving fluid.¹⁹

16 See Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 155 and Martin Noth, *Exodus* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 26–7. One could spend a near infinite amount of time citing parallels ranging from ancient Greece, India, and Rome. See Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Exploration of Myth* (trans. Gregory Richter and E. James Lieberman; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press), 2004; Brian Lewis, *The Sargon Legend* (ASORDS 4; Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research), 1980.

The parallel cited most often in relation to Moses' birth story, for example, is the birth legend of Sargon of Akkad. In this pseudo-autobiography Sargon relates how he was put by his unnamed mother in a little box made of reeds sealed with pitch. He was then set afloat in a river (the Euphrates) but was adopted by Aqqi, the water drawer. Aqqi raised him, and set Sargon as a gardener. The goddess Ishtar saw Sargon in the garden, grew fond of him, and made him into a great and powerful king. See also Donald B. Redford's seminal study on this theme in the ancient Near East, "The Literary Motif of the Exposed Child," *Numen* 14 (1967): 209–28.

17 Rank actually distinguishes between simple myths based on fantasies of urinating and those which combined fantasies of urinating with fantasies of being (re)born. The former were typical of "primitive peoples," while the latter were typical of more advanced societies; the story of the flood in Genesis, for instance, stands for Rank as a supreme example of the latter. See Otto Rank, "Die Symbolschichtung im Wecktraum und ihre Wiederkehr im mythischen Denken," in *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* 4 (1912), 51–115.

18 See Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 158.

19 The psychoanalytical explanation of this is best summarized by Alan Dundes: "Inasmuch as all human neonates are so to speak delivered from an initial flood (of am-

Rank's hypothesis that the river represents amniotic fluid indicates the polyvalent symbolism of water. The river is supposed to be the site of death for the male children of Israel, but instead we are provided with a story in which water carries the hero to safety and acts as a metaphorical birthing fluid. Moses, like God's first creation, is threatened by water but is preserved in an ark (תבה).²⁰ Indeed, in the opening sections of Exodus, water will serve as a continual source of protection for the Israelites and a source of death and destruction for the Egyptians, a theme which will reach its climax in the crossing of the Suph-Sea.

3. The Naming of Moses

Moses is only named after he is finished weaning, and his name is given to him by the Egyptian princess, not his biological mother:

And the child grew, and she [Moses' mother] brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became a son to her, and she called his name Moses (משה), and said: "For from the water I drew him out (משיתדו)" (Exod 2:10).

Several interesting issues arise in this naming sequence. For one, the pun is in the Hebrew language, but it is Pharaoh's daughter who utters it. Thus, the biblical text credits the daughter of Pharaoh with knowledge of the language spoken by the enslaved Israelites. Perhaps Moses' name is not of Hebrew origin at all then, but Egyptian. Philo and Josephus take this as a given, ignoring the biblical explanation of the naming of Moses, and suggest that his name is derived from an

niotic fluid) when the sac breaks, it is not impossible that the creation of the world was thought to have occurred in a similar fashion. As the individual was born, so was the earth born" ("The Flood as Male Myth of Creation," in *The Flood Myth* [ed. Alan Dundes; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988]).

- 20 The theme of death or destruction by water though eventually does connect itself with Moses. Moses would not perish in the waters of the Nile, but water was, at least on some level, the cause of the doom the Moses (see Num 20:1–13). An excellent story, preserved in the rabbinical literature, plays with this theme (See Jonathan Kirsch, *Moses: A Life* [New York: Ballantine Books, 1998], 49–50). In this account, Pharaoh has a nightmare about being out-weighted against a "suckling lamb" on the scales of justice. Thus, he seeks his wise-men and counselors to interpret the nightmare. One of these wise-men is the biblical character of Balaam, who interprets the nightmare to mean that a son will arise which will destroy the inhabitants of Egypt. Balaam advises Pharaoh to exterminate the Hebrews by water and cast the male children into the river. Afterwards, the astrologers of Pharaoh divine that the boy destined to redeem Israel will meet the fate of untimely death by water, which confirms to them that the boy is now dead. Of course, the story is meant to show how Pharaoh, the wise-men, and astrologers were misled by their vision of death by/through water.

Egyptian word for water (*mos*).²¹ While this remains a possibility (and certainly would be significant for the purposes of this paper), those who favour Egyptian origin for Moses' name most often refer to the word-fragment (*moše*) used in the language of ancient Egypt to name a child who was born on the anniversary of a particular god—the name Thutmose, for example, means “the god Thoth is born.”²²

If one takes the text as it is and favours Hebrew origin, there are still problems. Moses' name is the active participle (meaning “the one who draws out”), whereas one would have expected the passive (“the one who has been drawn out”), for the princess is the one who “draws out” and not Moses. Moses does, however, “draw out” elsewhere in the narrative (e.g., Exod 2:19),²³ and perhaps this is another purposeful ambiguity. The strong allusions in Moses' birth story to the crossing of the Suph-Sea hint that this active use of the participle foretells of Moses' eventual role as one who will draw out. This also seems to be the interpretation of Isa 63:11:

Then he remembered ancient days, the drawer (מֹשֶׁה) of his people;
Where is he that raised them up from the water, the shepherd of his flock?

Even Moses' name then refers to his future destiny of rescuing the Israelites from the water of the Suph-Sea. Moreover, in Ps 18:17 (=2 Sam 22:17) the verb מִשָּׁה is used in the Hiph'il to connote rescue from water: “He reached me from on high and took me; he rescued me (יִמְשֵׁנִי) from many waters.”

The problems and ambiguities found in Moses' naming sequence nicely encapsulate many of the themes previously highlighted. His name contains traces of Egyptian etymology, but is explained by a Hebrew pun. This mirrors the fact that he has two sets of parents, one Egyptian and one Hebrew. This has been anticipated by the uncertain nationality of the midwives. More unique to the portrayal of Moses is the ambiguity of his role as a passive or active character, which is adumbrated in his naming sequence. Even in his infancy, Moses is referred to as a one who actively draws out, displaying a strong will of his own. The stage is set for his appearance as a hero, a rescuer, and a saviour. Yet, the saviour only survives because of the shrewd actions of

21 Flavius Josephus, *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus* (trans. William Whiston; Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, n.d.), 76; John G. Griffiths, “The Egyptian Derivation of the Name Moses,” *JNES* 12 (1953): 225–31.

22 See Kirsch, *Moses: A Life*, 58–9; Ogden Goelet, “Moses' Egyptian Name,” *BR* 19 (2003): 12–17, 50–1.

23 Of course, the verb in 2:19 is דָּלָה and not מִשָּׁה, but the thematic portrayal is noteworthy.

others. Moses, despite his active name, does not draw himself out of the water; rather, he owes his life to a series of women who act with cunning, insight, and compassion. It is only because the daughter of Pharaoh draws Moses out of the water that “the one who draws out” is able to fulfill his future role.

4. Moses at the Well

The next episode in the life of Moses in which water plays a prominent place is his meeting with the seven daughters of Reuel (Jethro) at a well in Midian. As Alter has observed, these betrothal episodes are type-scenes and conform to an overall broad pattern.²⁴ Yet, it is in the alterations and particular circumstances of each type-scene that the text communicates its purpose. Like Jacob, Moses arrives at the well as one who is fleeing from another. However, here seven maidens come to the well. The number is perhaps exaggerated to emphasize the folk-tale like atmosphere of the pericope.²⁵ Another possibility is that by providing several possible maidens the text suggests that Zipporah is “merely one nubile daughter out of seven.”²⁶ There is no “love story” in this pericope. Moses saves all seven daughters, not just Zipporah, and there is no report of romance or connection between Moses and his future bride.²⁷

This may also help explain the lack of sexual undertones in Moses’ betrothal scene. For beyond the fact that the well was a popular singles’ spot, there is an association between water, foreignness, and fertility

24 Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 51–58 (52). The betrothal type-scene takes place with a future groom (or his surrogate) travelling to a foreign land. He encounters at a well a young girl who is usually identified as so-and-so’s daughter. After one of the characters draws water from the well, the maiden rushes home to announce news of the stranger’s arrival. Finally, a betrothal is concluded between the stranger and the girl (usually after a meal).

25 Groups of seven females is common in Canaanite literature. Hawran’s seven wives and the seven Kotaratu of Ugarit. Seven may symbolize here matrimony and procreation, though I would tend to think that this is a secondary emphasis of the text. See Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 171.

26 Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 57.

27 This, of course, relates to the broader theme of the characterization of Moses. Compared to the patriarchs or the stories about David, the reader is kept at a distance from the inner life of Moses. Propp flatly states: “[Moses’] private life is of little concern to biblical tradition” (*Exodus 1–18*, 176). His achievements are political and religious, as opposed to the patriarchs and matriarchs, for instance, whose great achievements are procreative.

that is usually combined in these type scenes. That they are always located in a “foreign” land possibly emphasizes “the sheer female otherness of the prospective wife.”²⁸ The well is also a symbol of fertility and even of the female in general.²⁹ Building off this metaphor the message of Prov 5:15: “Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well,” refers to adultery and is an admonition to remain faithful to one’s spouse. The well might then represent Zipporah, “from whom Moses drives off other men and for whom he performs an act of kindness.”³⁰ But the fact that Zipporah is not distinguished from the seven daughters until the very end of the passage is evidence that this is not a major theme in this pericope.³¹

Certainly, one essential part of the tale is to establish Zipporah as Moses’ wife, which leads to the short, but important, bridegroom of blood passage in 4:24–26.³² But even the birth report for Gershom constructs Moses as the active agent, eluding any mention of Zipporah.³³ Thus, it is possible to conclude that the intention of the text is to account for Moses’ relationship to his father-in-law, and not Zipporah.³⁴ This is supported by Exod 18:1–8 where Moses—having been separated from Zipporah, his sons, and his father-in-law—runs to embrace only Jethro.

The seven daughters, to return to the narrative, enact a series of quick actions typical of the women at these betrothal scenes: “And they came, and they drew water, and filled the troughs to water the flock of their father” (2:16). Alter submits that the reader should pay careful attention to who draws the water in each betrothal scene. So, for example, that Rebekah draws the water and shows initiative gives her weight in the story. Similarly, Jacob’s heroic act of removing the stone

28 Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 52.

29 It represents a wife in Prov 1:15–16, a prostitute in Prov 23:27, and a virgin (a sealed well) in Gen 29:2–10 and Songs 4:12.

30 Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 175.

31 This is made clear when one compares this passage to Jacob’s betrothal scene. Jacob goes to great lengths to remove the stone from the well, and thus draw its water. This acts as a foreshadowing device to Jacob’s long years of servitude in order to betroth Rachel (who is represented by the sealed well).

32 One might also mention the role that Zipporah possibly plays in Numbers 12, if indeed the wife being mentioned is Zipporah—which is far from certain.

33 This is especially interesting given the fact that it was often the mother in Hebrew tradition who named the child. See Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 152. This was also the case in the Egyptian tradition, as in Moses’ naming sequence in Exod 2:10. See Pascal Ver-nus, “Namengebung,” *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 4 (1982): 326–27.

34 See George W. Coats, *Moses: Heroic Man, Man of God* (JSOTSup 57; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 49–53 (esp. 51).

from the mouth of the well emphasizes that he is the dynamic character in this story. Thus, one might believe that the seven daughters are to be the focus of the passage. These expectations are short lived though, as the text recounts a typical obstacle to the attainment of water when shepherds arrive at the well and drive (גרש) the women away. Here Moses bursts back into the narrative and delivers (ישע) the women from this threat and waters (שקה) their flock.

The connection with water, deliverance, and drawing out again foreshadows the crossing of the Suph-Sea. In Exod 14:30 the text informs us: "And Yahweh delivered (ישע) Israel on that day from the hand of Egypt [...] and the people feared Yahweh, and they trusted in Yahweh and in Moses his servant." Of course, it is Yahweh who is given credit for deliverance in 14:30, and not Moses; however, the addendum of the people trusting in Moses implies the role of deliverance to him as well. Similarly, Moses' watering (שקה) the flock of the daughters foreshadows his later miraculous productions of water for the Israelites in the desert.

These themes are also enforced in the Midianite daughters recounting of how Moses rescued (נצל) them from the hand of the shepherds in which they highlight that he drew, drew (דלה דלה, the verb is repeated) water for them. The verb דלה is somewhat synonymous with משה (the term associated with Moses name) but is a more general term for drawing water and does not seem to require an object, whereas משה is used when something is being drawn out of the water.³⁵ In any case, the repetition of the verb draws our attention to it, and is what the daughters wish to emphasize in their report to their father.³⁶ But as we have already noted, it was the seven daughters who drew (דלה) the water, and not Moses; he is only described as having watered the flock. Is this a contradiction in the biblical text? Or is the reader to infer that the hostile shepherds drank the girl's water, and thus deduce that Moses graciously drew the water for the girls again? Or is there something purposeful in this ambiguity? Did Moses really draw water for the women, or did he only water their flock with the water they had already drawn? Regardless, it is clear that even in this short episode, there are traces of the multiple levels of characterization of Moses. It is stressed that he is the one who draws out the water, and yet the text ascribes this to the women as well. Moses is portrayed as a deliverer

35 However, neither דלה nor משה are used frequently in the Hebrew Bible. The more popular word, and the one found in many of the other well betrothal scenes, is שאב.

36 See Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 315–16.

and rescuer here, but then when he plays a similar role with the Israelites he is never bestowed so explicitly with such titles.

It is also important to observe that Moses' identity issues come to the fore in Midian. The reader is provided with a rare glimpse into the inner thoughts of Moses' life when he names his first son: "And he called his name Gershom (גרשם), for he said: 'A sojourner (גר) was I in a strange land'" (2:22).³⁷ The text is ambiguous though, which is the strange land Moses refers to? Midian? Or Egypt? The use of the perfect הייתי implies a more distant past and thus the evidence leans toward Egypt. It also suggests, therefore, that Moses—after having married, born a child, and settled in with his father in law—believes Midian is now his home. The ensuing narrative, however, will show that Moses still is a sojourner and the course of his life will not revolve around either Midian or Egypt.

5. Plagues and Water

In the narrative surrounding the plagues, water is used as a medium of death and destruction. But these plagues of destruction are meant to bring about Israel's freedom, and thus water also can be seen as a medium of deliverance. This is played out in the motif that only the Egyptians suffer from the plagues and not the Israelites. It is also significant to note the role that Moses plays in the plague narratives. There is little sign of any of the heroic, passionate action the reader has seen in his killing of the Egyptian (2:11–15) and his rescuing of the Midianite daughters (2:16–22). There is also no extended dialogue between Yahweh and Moses in which one is angry at the other, nor moments when Moses questions his abilities.³⁸

In establishing the setting for the first plague³⁹ (like the setting for the fourth and the seventh) Moses is told to station himself before

37 The name Gerhsom also serves as a possible phonetic play with the verb גרש which is used earlier in the narrative when Moses drives the shepherds away.

38 For examples of anger at one another see chs. 3–4 and 5:22, and for examples of Moses questioning his abilities see 6:12 and 30, as well as chs. 3–4.

39 There is some contention as to whether there actually are "ten" plagues recounted in the text, and which plague might actually count as the "first." The text itself, never gives us a tally. However, like most commentators I adhere to the traditional counting of ten, despite the difference in number among the several sources that make up the final form of the text. Thus I also count the turning of the Nile into blood as the "first" plague. This is largely due to the way the plague account is structured, with

Pharaoh in the morning. Interestingly, in the first and fourth plague the text remarks that Pharaoh was by the water when Moses informed him of the forthcoming plague. Why exactly Pharaoh is mentioned as being by water is not entirely clear.⁴⁰ We have already encountered Pharaoh's daughter going out to the water to bathe, but there is no suggestion of such actions here. Sarna suggests that the reason may involve some ceremony associated with morning rituals, or it may be for the worship of the Nile during the inundation period.⁴¹ One cannot offer any certain conclusion. Of course, it is clear that the Nile functions as an important site of memory and at least for the first plague the scene demands the presence of Pharaoh at the waterside.⁴² The text also adds that Moses was to present himself to Pharaoh at the "shore of the Nile" (שפת הניל). This echoes Moses being placed upon the "shore of the Nile" in 2:3 as well as 14:30 when the Israelites see the Egyptian corpses upon the "lip of the Sea" (שפת הים).⁴³

The reader has already been informed of some of the details of the first plague. In 4:9 Yahweh informs Moses: "And if they are not convinced by both these signs [the staff-snake sign and the leprosy sign] and still do not heed you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground (יבשה). And the water that you have taken from the Nile will turn to blood on the dry ground." In fact, when the first plague actually occurs, all the waters of Egypt, not just what Moses spills, turn into blood. Nevertheless, another connection is made then between this forecast of the first plague and the crossing of the Suph-Sea. This is found in the emphasis on "dry ground" (יבשה) in the midst of water (see 14:16, 21, 22, 29; 15:19).

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the first plague though is the link it creates between water and blood. The connection is purposeful in that blood, like water, is normally associated as a life-giving sub-

three different triads and then finally the paschal night. See Nahum Sarna, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 38.

40 A similar difficulty lies in explaining the fact that the first, fourth, and seventh plagues record that Moses encountered Pharaoh in the morning. Perhaps Yahweh has spoken to Moses in a night vision and recounts to his prophet what he should do the following morning. See Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 323.

41 Sarna, *Exodus*, 39. The Bible records several instances of Egyptian royalty going to the Nile (Gen 41:7; Exod 2:5; 7:16 and 8:16), and Ezekiel envisions Pharaoh as a huge reptile wallowing in the river (Ezek 29:3–5; 32:2–6).

42 Water functioning as important site of memory is supported by biblical references such as the "rivers in Babylon" (Ps 137:1), or Ezekiel's remark that his vision occurred "by the river of Chebar" (Ezek 1:1).

43 On the Nile see the essay by Diana Edelman in this volume.

stance.⁴⁴ The Nile, for instance, was deified and one might metaphorically refer to it as the life-blood of Egypt. Thus, since the first plague literally changes water to blood, it reverses the theme of blood and water as life giving and creates the disturbing image of “a land bleeding from its main artery.”⁴⁵ In this sense the plague functions as a retaliatory gesture toward Pharaoh’s decree that all the Hebrew sons be thrown in the Nile, in which the Nile would have been filled with corpses.

Blood will also play a prominent role in the last plague. As Pardes observes, “this final plague seems to represent the final push in Israel’s delivery.”⁴⁶ For the blood not only functions in an apotropaic way, but its location on the two side posts of the door evokes natal imagery.⁴⁷ Pardes relates this connection between blood and birth by looking at Ezek 16:4–8. She interprets Jerusalem to stand for the entire nation and therefore sees this passage as another example of narrating national formation. In the verses Yahweh relates how Israel was deserted by its parents at birth, left soaking in blood without the help of postpartum care. However, Yahweh passed by Jerusalem, saw how polluted she was in her own blood and cried out to her: “Live and grow up like a plant of the field” (16:6). Yahweh thereby adjured Jerusalem to regard the marks of blood on her body as a source of life, and not as the sign of neglect that they had become. Blood and water (and their mixture) have multiple connections to birth imagery. The first plague turns water to blood; it sets the scene for Israel’s deliverance. The last plague, Israel’s “final push,” evokes birth imagery with blood on the two sides of the doorposts. This is followed by Israel’s metaphorical birth in the crossing of the Suph-Sea with the two walls of water protecting Israel from death by drowning.⁴⁸

44 Blood might also be connected to water in the multitude of ways that it is used as a symbol in biblical literature. It might be construed as the source and substance of life, as an apotropaic, as a redemptive agent, or as a token of violence and death. Moreover, the substance plays almost as prominent a role as water in the beginning chapters of Exodus. The plagues end and begin with blood, and on the way to Egypt, Moses’ life is saved by a rite carried out through blood, much as his life is saved by the water of the Nile. See Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 327, 348.

45 Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 325.

46 Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel*, 25.

47 Ibid., 26.

48 But again, it is important to emphasise that while blood and water is what protects the Israelites it is what brings death to the Egyptians. While water has served as a threat to both Israel and Moses thus far, it has always been reversed into a threat to Egypt. Thus, we find a repeated emphasis in the first plague that the Egyptians could not “drink (שקה) the waters from the Nile” (7:21, 24). No mention is made that

6. Suph-Sea

The parting of the Suph-Sea stands as a central story in the narratives involved with water. The destructive force of water, which has been portrayed in many of the other narratives analysed so far, reaches its climax in the crossing of the Suph-Sea: “the sea covered them [the Egyptian army]; they sank like lead in strong waters” (15:10).⁴⁹ In contrast to the symbolism of water as agent of death and destruction for the Egyptians, it serves as a protecting fluid for the Israelites and also portrays birth imagery as well. The crossing of the Suph-Sea also contains hints of associating water with cleansing and judgment.⁵⁰ Understood in terms of cleansing, the story symbolises the Hebrews’ washing off of their slavery. In terms of judgment, it could be understood as a separating of the righteous from the wicked; Israel passed this symbolic ordeal while Egypt failed.⁵¹

Exodus 14–15 also functions as a transition of sorts; henceforth the nation will become more heavily personified and speak with its own voice. The personification is that of the people as the (firstborn) son of God the father (and, at times, mother). Moses is caught in between the two and never fully aligns himself with the perspective of God or the nation. But this is, yet again, evidence of the complexity of Moses’ role.

Israel is unaffected by this plague (as it is in the narration of some of the other plagues), but it is implied. However, perhaps even here there is a foreshadowing of a time when water will no longer protect and act as a medium of survival for the Israelites. The most explicit reference is to Marah (Exod 15:22–27) in which it will be the Israelites who encounter water which they are not able to “drink” (שקה) (15:23). In the same manner the symbol of the staff of Moses (and Aaron) striking the water provides a brief glimpse into the ultimate fate of Moses, as it is played out in Num 20:1–13.

49 See also 15:5.

50 See Propp, *Exodus* 1–18, 561–62. Propp combines all of these symbols (cleansing, judgment, death, and birth) as possible evidence to the overall theme of “the rite of passage” motif, which plays an important role in the entire Exodus narrative. Potentially, all of these themes are found in Moses’ birth story as well, see above.

51 The association of judgment and water occurs also in the curious case of the river ordeal in Num 5:11–31. The pericope presupposes that water is able to effect the securing of divine judgment. This is enforced by the curious phrase “holy water” (מים קדשים). The accused woman is subjected to a test of drinking the holy water, into which particles of dirt from the sanctuary floor have been mixed, which becomes “water of bitterness that brings a curse” (ממי המרים המאדרים האלה).

The river ordeal echoes both the story of the Golden Calf and Marah. In the episode of the Golden Calf, Moses returns to the Israelite camp and grinds the idol into powder and forces the Israelites drink it. Again, water is associated with judgment. The mention of “bitter water” (מר and מים) alludes to the Marah episode, which also associates, in a more oblique way, water as judgment for the people.

As we have already seen there have been a multitude of allusions which prefigure the crossing of the Suph-Sea. One I have left unmentioned is the plague of the locusts. The similarities in the two narratives are extensive.⁵² The advent of locusts is caused by an “east wind” (רוח קדים), similarly the recession of the Suph-Sea is caused by a strong “east wind” (רוח קדים) (10:13 and 14:21). In both cases the subject who causes action is Yahweh as he “drives/makes drive” (נהג) the wind carrying the locusts as well as Pharaoh’s chariots (10:13 and 14:25). Both the locusts and the Egyptians are drowned in the Suph-Sea (10:19 and 14:27–28; 15:1–10). And finally, the text recounts in both passages that “not one [...] was left” (לא נשאר [...] אחד) (10:19 and 14:28).⁵³

The drama of the Suph-Sea narrative is orchestrated by God. He causes the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Baal-Zaphon. Moreover, he is the one who hardens Pharaoh’s heart and spurs him to pursue after the Israelites. Thus, it may cause some surprise that the nation’s first words are directed as a complaint against Moses:⁵⁴ “And they said to Moses: ‘Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you [sg.] taken us to die in the wilderness? What is this you [sg.] did to us, by taking us out from Egypt (14:11)?’” But by directing their complaint against Moses, the Israelites also afford a role to Moses that is more important than one usually bestowed upon him, namely that *he* brought them out of Egypt (without mention of Yahweh). That the Israelites direct their complaint against Moses is perhaps not entirely unfair then; he is the one who purports to know the divine plan in the first place, and functions as the mouthpiece of the deity to the people.

But then, to complicate the matter, Yahweh responds to Moses and exhorts him: “Why do you [sg.] cry out against me?” (14:15). Some commentators assume that the original text must have been in the plural,⁵⁵ but there is no evidence for this. A more common approach is to assume that Yahweh is addressing Moses as spokesman for the people. Whatever the case, the current text exemplifies the difficult role Moses

52 The following observations are taken largely from Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 339.

53 The connection between the two passages is supported further by the fact that armies and locusts are often compared to each other (e.g., Joel 1; Judg 6:5; Isa 33:4, etc.).

54 Earlier in the narrative the foremen of the Israelites complain to Moses, and presumably they represent the viewpoint of the community as a whole (5:21). However, it is here that the reader is first introduced to Israel speaking in the singular and representing a counter voice/perspective to the plan of Moses (and God), a theme that will continue throughout the narrative.

55 See Noth, *Exodus*, 113.

plays in this drama, as both Yahweh and the Israelites direct their complaints against him (and not each other).

The confusing role of Moses may also be supported by the slight variations in the repetitions of the command to part the sea. In the first instance (14:16), Moses is the subject of the verbs, as he lifts his staff, extends his arm, and splits the sea (בקע). Granted, the verbs are all imperatives from Yahweh, but the sense of the text is that Moses is the one who will split the sea. Of course, when these actions are carried out and the text repeats itself, the miraculous acts are attributed solely to Yahweh: "And Moses extended his hand over the sea, and *Yahweh* conducted the sea with a forward wind, and he made the sea into dry ground, and the waters were split" (14:21). The role of Moses is even further diminished in the song of ch. 15. He, along with all of Israel, praises Yahweh alone for the miracle at the Suph-Sea. And in Miriam's refrain Moses is not mentioned at all, not even as co-composer.⁵⁶ Perhaps there is a small polemic in this juxtaposition of material against attributing any power of Moses over water. Yahweh has control over the waters; he is the one who piles up the waters with a blast of his nostrils. The great man Moses, the unequaled prophet, plays a key role in this drama, but ultimately he has no power over the waters: all praise is to be directed toward Yahweh.

This complex portrayal of Moses is enforced by an examination of the parallels between Moses' birth story and the crossing of the Suph-Sea, some of which we have already noted. A number of linguistic similarities link the passages together: the use of the rare word סוף "reeds" (2:3, 5 and 15:4, 22), the phrase "lip-of-ים/אֵר" (2:3 and 14:30), and the repetition of בָּחוּךְ (2:5 and 14:6, 22, 23, 27, 28; 15:19). These associations support Pardes's hypothesis that the crossing of the Suph-Sea represents the metaphorical (if not literal) birth of the nation, as she asserts:

Much like Moses, the nation is drawn out of the water against all odds. It is an intensified miracle: a wonder on a great scale. The two enormous walls of water, the ultimate breaking of the waters, and the exciting appearance

56 Some of this is evidence to scholars of an anti-Moses tradition. Of course, there is good evidence for this throughout the Pentateuch; however, a less controversial argument suggests that the short shrift Moses may be given at times functions more as a characterization device; it is evidence that the biblical authors were hesitant to praise Moses so extravagantly that he might come to be regarded as godlike. See Kirsch, *Moses*, 23–24, 66–67, and 122–24.

of the dry land all seem to represent a gigantic birth, a birth that is analogous to the creation of the world.⁵⁷

Hidden behind the manifest metaphors of the crossing of the Suph-Sea then, Pardes suggests, is the feminine hand of Yahweh, a grand type of midwife who draws the newborn nation out of the depths (Exod 15:8). Thus, the role of Yahweh at the Suph-Sea is foreshadowed by the action of the Hebrew Midwives in 1:15–20. However, as we have seen the text fluctuates between attributing this great act solely to Yahweh, or to a combination of the actions of both Yahweh and Moses. Building off Pardes, I would suggest that Moses also functions as a midwife in the crossing of the Suph-Sea as well as Yahweh.

Thus, the comparison between Moses' birth story and the crossing of the Suph-Sea could work on other levels. Propp, for instance, parallels Yahweh's role at the Suph-Sea to Pharaoh's daughter; both save a son from the threat of waters.⁵⁸ Moses represents the servant of Pharaoh's daughter; both act as mere agents of carrying out their superior's will. And finally, Israel represents Moses; both are infant sons drawn who are saved by being drawn out of water. This analogy again emphasizes the interconnection between the life of Moses and the life of Israel.

Another parallel between the life of Moses and the nation is found in the complex identity issues surrounding both. As we have seen the story of Moses' birth complicates any easy answer to some very fundamental questions of identity; questions such as "Who am I? Who are my parents? Where do I come from?"⁵⁹ His mother and father come from the tribe of Levi, yet he is raised as a son by Pharaoh's daughter. He is regarded by his future wife (along with her six sisters) as an Egyptian. He then is linked to Midian through his betrothal to Zipporah, where for the briefest moment he appears to consider himself to be

57 Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, 28. That the crossing of the Suph-Sea is analogous to the creation of the world is enforced by the repetition of key terms which harken back to Genesis 1. This includes God's breath-spirit-wind (רוח) and his dividing of the water (מים) from dry ground (יבשה). Pardes also notes similarities between the "blast" of God's "nostrils" on the waters in Exod 15:8 and the creation of Adam in Gen 2:7 (28). Moreover, almost all commentators refer to the correspondences between the crossing of the Suph-Sea and the so-called Combat Myth in which various storm deities quelled and repelled the inimical, primordial waters. Not all of the ancient Near Eastern combat myths are tied to cosmogony, and not all result in the outcome of "creation," so to speak (see Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 555–57). However, that the genre of cosmogony so often overlaps with the Combat Myth and that creation is also intimately tied with it, again leads us back to birth imagery.

58 Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 154.

59 See Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, 32.

at home. A similar identity problem arises in the birth story of the nation. Egypt, as the place in which Israel is born out of, might represent the maternal womb. Indeed, as will become clear in the narrative that follows Egypt represents a desired homeland to the people, one that is contrasted and juxtaposed to the Promised Land of Canaan. Pardes summarizes:

The children of Israel are torn between two lands, between their deep ties to Egypt and their desire to seek another land. They were not raised in the Egyptian court, as Moses was, but nonetheless Egypt is not only the site of traumas for them: it served, however partially, as a nurturing motherland of sorts, especially the luscious land of Goshen. The birth of Israel entails a painful process of individuation from Egypt that is never fully resolved.⁶⁰

It is interesting to note Israel's continued idealization of Egypt in subsequent narrative in comparison to Moses' total silence on the subject. For while Goshen might have had its upside, it is clear that things were far from perfect for the Israelites in Egypt. Moses, on the other hand, presumably was quite well off in Egypt (up until he became a fugitive, of course). Yet, even in the one veiled reference that we have to Moses' view on Egypt in 2:22, he seems to identify Egypt as a land in which he was a sojourner. For a short while, it seems as if Midian was home for Moses. But even Midian will not be the land that Moses dreams upon entering and leading his flock into. It will be a land flowing with "milk and honey," a true motherland; it will also be a land he never enters.

7. Water in the Desert

The crossing of the Suph-Sea represents a transition of sorts in the interweaving of the biography of Moses and the biography of the nation. The nation now has a voice of its own, and often presents an opinion that differs from Moses' or Yahweh's. For Pardes, the wandering in the wilderness represents the weaning stage in the nation's development.⁶¹ Water will play a central role in the desert wanderings as well, but a decidedly different one than has been symbolized thus far. It will largely be mentioned in reference to the theme of thirst (and hunger) in the wilderness. In connection to the hypothesis that the desert wanderings represent a period of weaning, thirst refers to the sharp and primary

⁶⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁶¹ This is an area of the nation's biography which seemingly has no correspondence in the life of Moses.

sense of loss that happens to infants when they are torn away from their mother; the mother in this case is the mother(land) of Egypt.⁶²

But unlike a normal weaning process in which independence of the mother is emphasized, the desert wanderings encourage a cutting off of the umbilical cord from mother Egypt only in order to promote dependence on the mothering qualities of Yahweh (and Moses) as well as the future promise of a more perfect mother(land) in Canaan. Pardes notes: "Moses tries to wean the nation from its yearning for idolatrous water by drawing a distinction between pure sources and muddy waters, or in Jeremiah's terms, between seeking the 'Fount of living water' and 'going back to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile' (Jer 2:13–18)."⁶³

Thus, Moses' role is again a complex, unclear one, in which he acts as a type of nursing midwife for the people in combination with Yahweh. This is perhaps the reason for the emphasis on "suckling" (the root ינק is used four times in Exod 2:7–9) in Moses' birth story. The reader will not encounter ינק again until Num 11:12 where Moses has grown tired with the complaints of the people and the role that Yahweh has cast him in, and laments to Yahweh:

Have I conceived (הרה) all this people? Have I given birth (ילד) to him? That you should say to me, "Carry him in your bosom, as a nurse (אמן) bears the suckling child (ינק), unto the land which you have sworn to his fathers"?

The suckling who had been saved by the actions of his mother and who was raised as a son by Pharaoh's daughter is reluctant to be cast in the role of nursing father for the suckling nation. What Moses wants to emphasise is that this is God's role, not his. However, what he appears not to be aware of is how his own speech is evidence itself of how connected his own life is to Israel's, and how simply by association with Yahweh he is bound to play this role.

8. Marah

After the Song of the Sea the text returns to prose narrative and recounts that Moses made the Israelites journey out from the Suph-Sea into the wilderness of Shur.⁶⁴ Immediately, the major problem of the

⁶² Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, 42.

⁶³ Ibid., 59.

⁶⁴ Interestingly, "Shur" שור may be Canaanite or Hebrew for "wall," as it separated the land of Egypt from the land of nomads. Again, that this is the first place that Israel

desert is made apparent, the people cannot find any water. They finally arrive at Marah, but true to its namesake the people are not able to drink the water, for it is bitter (מרה). That the Israelites “were not able to drink the water” (15:23) alludes back to the first plague when the Egyptians “were not able to drink the water from the Nile” (7:21). The Israelites have seen Moses and Yahweh turn drinkable water into undrinkable water; now they require the opposite miracle of turning undrinkable water into drinkable water.

The people murmur (לון) against Moses again, a trope which is played out with regularity in the desert wanderings.⁶⁵ The implications of this murmuring are perhaps portrayed in that מרה (“bitter”) puns easily with מרי/מרה (“to rebel” or “rebellion”).⁶⁶ Just as the water is “bitter” in the Israelites’ mouth, so is the rebellion of the Israelites “bitter” to Moses and their deity.

After Moses cries to Yahweh, Yahweh “shows/instructs” ירה Moses some wood/a tree עץ, which he casts into the water, thereby making it drinkable. It is significant to Pardes that the text explicitly says that the waters became sweet (וימתקו המים), because sweet water represents more than water; such imagery suggests nourishing breast milk. In support of this suggestion one finds an implicit theme of sweetness related to water in the short narrative of Elim that immediately follows Marah, in which there are twelve springs of water and seventy date-palms (תמרין).⁶⁷ The sweet date palms contrast with the bitter waters at Marah. Propp observes: “Ex 15:27 curiously encapsulates the main themes of 15:22–17:7: the provision of honey sweet food and drink.”⁶⁸

The unusual construction of Yahweh “showing” ירה Moses a piece of wood, leads the reader into the latter half of the Marah pericope, which interprets the miracle as a form of instruction (Torah is derived

travels to after its crossing of the Suph-Sea emphasises separation from Egypt and a new beginning.

65 See Exod 16:2–3, 6–9; 17:3; Num 11:4–6; 14:2–3; 16:13–14; 20:2–5; 21:4–5.

66 The text makes explicit that it was “there” (שם) at Marah that this happened, which is enforced by the wordplay of שם שם in v. 25 and the overall repetition of both words in the latter half of the pericope.

67 The numbers of twelve and seventy echo the twelve tribes and the seventy elders of Israel (as well as the seventy “souls” נפש that came out of the loins of Jacob in Exod 1:5).

68 Besides sweetness, the shape of the date-palm trees deserves comment, as in Song of Songs in which the lover tells his beloved: “Your stature is like a date-palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I have said, I will climb up the date-palm tree and I will take hold of its boughs” (7:7–8). Similarly, in Exodus 16, the taste of manna is described as something similar to “wafers with honey” (16:31). Moreover, its appearance in Num 11:8 is described as being like a “fine and flaky substance,” and its color is white (like coriander seed).

from the root (ירה). One is also confronted with the enigmatic line: "There did he set him a statute (חק) and an ordinance (משפט) and there he tested him (נסהו)." It is not entirely clear who the subject of the verbs "set" and "test" is.⁶⁹ But again, this slipperiness could be purposeful as it plays with exactly what Moses' role is here. It is unlikely that Israel is the subject or that Yahweh is the object, but Moses could be considered one or the other. The most likely reading is Yahweh as the subject and Israel as the object—which would again be indicative of the slighting of Moses' role—but one cannot conclude this with any certainty.

Furthermore, it is not entirely clear what the test implies. What exactly does drinkable water have to do with testing? Propp connects this with other legal terms in this latter half of the episode (מצוה, מציפה, חק) and asserts that the healing tree of Marah could itself symbolize the Torah, which could help explain the quasi-Deuteronomic diction. If nothing else, Yahweh's gift of drinking water and health are pre-conditions for the covenant, a foreshadowing of Sinai. This is enforced by the covenant-like diction in v. 26: "If you heed the voice of Yahweh, your God, and do what is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commands, and keep his statutes, all the sickness (מחלה) that I put upon Egypt I will not put upon you, for I, Yahweh, am your healer (רפא)."

Exodus 23:25–26 offers an interesting intertext: "But you shall serve Yahweh your God, and he will bless your bread and your waters, and [he] shall remove sickness (מחלה) from your midst. There will not be any miscarriage (משכלה) or abortion in your land [...]" The linguistic and thematic ties to the spring narrative in 2 Kgs 2:19–22 are evident as well. The curing of waters in this tale is also preceded by a parting of waters. The men of the town explain to Elisha that "the water is bad (רעים) and the land miscarries (משכלה)." Elisha then throws salt into the spring and declares: "Thus says Yahweh, 'I heal (רפא) this water; no longer shall death and miscarriage come from it.'"⁷⁰ Reading all three of these texts together one finds the possibility of "death and miscarriage" implicit in Marah. If the infant nation does not learn to follow the instructions of its parent, then the consequences may be dire. By referencing the "sickness" (מחלה) of Egypt the Marah episode implies that the fate of infant Israel could be that of the infants of Egypt who were affected by the plagues, as if the infant nation will die and become a mis-

69 The closest parallel, Josh 24:25, presents a human as the subject (see also Gen 47:26 and 1 Sam 30:25). However, God also can "set a rule" as in Jer 33:25 and Prov 8:29.

70 In Ezek 47:8–9 the waters of the Dead Sea are similarly "healed" (רפא) in the prophet's vision of the restored temple. Notions of fertility, salvation, prosperity, and blessing are all brought together in the water imagery in these verses.

carriage from its sickness (rebellion) without its healer. In this way Marah also links with Exod 1–2 in which both the nation and Moses were vulnerable to the very real threat of “miscarriage.” However, the key difference between those passages and Marah is that in the desert survival becomes conditional on the actions of Israel. Marah infers that Israel is bound to covenant duty even before Sinai. Moses and Yahweh try to wean the nation from yearnings for idolatrous, bitter waters by drawing a distinction between drinkable and undrinkable water. Rebellion against Yahweh is bitter water that does not refresh and causes sickness, but adherence to the voice of Yahweh and his commands is fresh, sweet water that quenches thirst.

9. Rephidim

After recounting the issue of the Israelites’ hunger in Exodus 16, the theme of thirst occurs again in Exodus 17. The location of this episode is Rephidim, somewhere nearby the rock in Horeb. This time the issue is not that there are “bitter waters” but rather that there is no water at all. The complaint of the Israelites is also intensified, at least in comparison to the rather tame “what shall we drink?” of the Marah episode. The text records that “the people quarrelled with Moses” (וִירִיבוּ הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה), but then they demand water from Moses *and* someone else, presumably Yahweh (the MT has the plural תְּנוּ).⁷¹ While there is manuscript evidence for the verb to be in the singular, it is noteworthy that Moses and Yahweh are again melded together. Perhaps the reason for the plural is evidence of yet another denial of Moses as the one who really provides water—water is not something that Moses can provide all by himself. Interestingly, Moses interprets the grievance against him as one against Yahweh as well: “Why do you quarrel (רִיבוּ) against me? Why do you test (נִסֶּה) Yahweh?” But then, as if to refute Moses’ elaboration that their complaint and test is against both Yahweh and Moses the Israelites again address only Moses and cry out: “Why did you [sg.] bring us up from Egypt, to kill me, my sons, and livestock with thirst?” The insinuation is that Moses alone brought Israel out of Egypt, as if to deny Yahweh’s role.⁷²

71 The plural could refer to Moses and Aaron, but this is much less likely, especially in light of the fact that Moses interprets the complaint against himself and Yahweh.

72 Significantly, when Yahweh is angry with Moses he will use the same rhetoric, as in Exod 32:7.

However, by the end of the pericope, the quarrel and testing appears to be purely between Israel and Yahweh: "And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrelling of the Israelites and for their testing of Yahweh..." (Exod 17:7). Thus, the formula of Marah in which Yahweh tested Israel (or, at least, the consensus interpretation of Exod 15:25) is reversed. Propp's observation that the purpose of tales of assuaged thirst was to assure the Israelites that Yahweh had both the "power and disposition to furnish drinking water and in general succor people in desperate situations,"⁷³ is only half true then. The wilderness journey is also a time for the people to test God's vigilance and love (as well as Moses').⁷⁴ Hence, the Israelites complaint in v. 7 is presented in terms of the presence or absence of God: "Is Yahweh in our midst or not?" Lack of water, lack of provision, is interpreted as a sign of abandonment.

The miracle of water production in Exodus 17 occurs when Moses strikes a rock with his rod. Specific mention is made by Yahweh to Moses that the rod to be used is the one "with which you struck the Nile" (17:5). Thus, the tool used to render the Nile undrinkable will now be used to produce water for the people to drink. Yahweh also informs Moses he will be standing before Moses by the rock of Horeb (17:6), which is certainly an important theological point, but is also significant in that Horeb means "dry place." That Yahweh stands before the rock also reminds the readers (and Moses) who is really working the miracles.⁷⁵

73 William H.C. Propp, *Water in the Wilderness: A Biblical Motif and Its Mythological Background* (HSM 40; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 9. Propp also observes that such stories constitute a minor literary genre, as one can find many parallels in world folklore.

74 Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, 45.

75 Typical psychoanalytical interpretation would probably interpret the water flowing from a rock (צור, סלע, חלמיש) as a parallel to milk flowing from the mother's breast. But one does not need to follow Freudian thought blindly, and indeed the biblical material, as always, both fits this hypothesis and supplements it. So, on the one hand, water from the rock imagery easily fits into the central drama in the psyche of the infant: nourishment from the mother. But what does it mean that this breast is a rock? The answer is multifaceted.

In one sense, water from the rock identifies God as the mother who provides, for one of the deity's recurring epithets in the Pentateuch is precisely that he is a rock. In Deuteronomy 32 this is especially prevalent, as in v.18 in which Moses admonishes the people:

You neglected the Rock (צור) which begot you;
and you forgot the God who brought you forth.

10. Kadesh

The second scene of rod and rocks takes place at Kadesh and is recorded in Num 20:1–13. The repetition of these thirst scenes is not without significance: “it creates a rhythm of a whining child and matches the slow and frustrating pace of a voyage whose end recedes time and again.”⁷⁶ At the same time, each new scene seems to intensify. For example, the Israelites’ complaint in Num 20 is not just a matter of thirst (as in Exod 15), nor a mere fear of death (as in Exod 17), but rather an ardent wish of the Israelites that they share the same fate as their dead brothers whom God had killed earlier in the narrative (Korah, the spies, etc.).⁷⁷

Thus, it is Yahweh who, like a mother, begot and brought forth the people, but his title as “Rock” (צור)—which occurs throughout this chapter (vv. 4, 15, 30, 31)—provides additional significance when read with v.13:

He [Yahweh] made him [Israel] ride upon the high places of the earth, and he [Israel] ate the fruit of the field.

He [Yahweh] made him [Israel] suckle honey from the crag (סלע), and oil from the flinty rock (מחלמיש צור).⁷⁸

The text implicitly states the Israelites are sucking honey and oil from Yahweh since he is the rock. To enforce the point there is a pun on שָׂדֵי “field” and שָׁד “breast,” hinting that the line could read: “And Israel ate the fruit of the breast.” Similar imagery is found Ps 81. The poem recalls Meribah: “In distress you [Israel] called and I [God] made you strong; I answered you in a secret place of thunder; I examined (בִּחֵן) you at the waters of Meribah ... widen your mouth that I [God] may fill it ... If only my people would listen to me ... he [God] would feed him from the finest wheat, and from a rock (צור) I would satiate you with honey (דֶּבֶשׁ).”

But if there is maternal imagery here, as I would suggest, the fact that it comes from a hard rock is also significant. For Pardes it attests to “the difficulties embedded in suckling from a God whose breasts are as hard as rocks and whose milk needs to be drawn out by force. God’s body is as stiff as the nation’s neck” (*Biography of Ancient Israel*, 47). There is also a sort of oxymoron in which that which is hard produces water, a malleable liquid.

⁷⁶ Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, 48.

⁷⁷ Another interesting addition in Numbers 20 is the mention that Miriam died and was buried at Kadesh, as recorded in v.1. This obituary notice is surprisingly short, with no mention of any national mourning for her, as there is for Moses and Aaron later in the narrative. But the real question is why this information is located particularly here. Pardes wonders if Miriam’s death intensifies the thirst in the dry palates of the people “as it triggers the memory of Egypt’s lost fleshpots” (*Biography of Ancient Israel*, 61). Miriam is associated with water throughout the Pentateuch. She is the one who stood beside the reeds of the Nile watching over Moses’ ark, orchestrating his deliverance. She is also intriguingly mentioned just before the Marah episode, as she takes up her timbrel and celebrates the deliverance of the infant nation from Egypt after it has passed through the Sea of Reeds. These associations all contributed to the Midrashic tradition of Miriam’s Well which followed the Israelites throughout their desert wanderings.

The Israelites assemble themselves (קהל) against Moses and Aaron and quarrel (ריב) against them: "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to bring us to this evil place, not a place of seed or fig-tree or vine or pomegranate, and no water to drink?" (20:5). The grievance contrasts the desert with Egypt, not the Promised Land, which is supposed to be the place of "vines," "fig trees" and "pomegranates" (see Deut 8:7–8).⁷⁸ And again there is a slight disjunction between the Israelites quarrelling with Moses and Aaron earlier in the pericope (v. 2) and the Israelites quarrelling only with Yahweh later (v. 13).

Instead of offering any answer to the grievance Yahweh instructs Moses and Aaron to assemble (קהל) the community in order that they might bring water out of the rock before their very eyes by speaking to it. After doing so Moses offers a short, unscripted speech to the people: "Listen, you rebels (המרית), shall we bring forth water from this rock for you?"⁷⁹ He then strikes the rock twice and water gushes out of it.

The next sentence is what really perplexes commentators, as Yahweh accuses Moses and Aaron of not having enough trust (אמן) in him and thus not sanctifying (קדש) his name.⁸⁰ Pardes asserts that in striking the rock so forcefully, without having been commanded to do so, Moses gives expression to the people's "acute desire to seize God's hidden waters," and thus becomes, in a sense, more of the people's agent than God's.⁸¹ Relatedly, Moses' unprompted speech implies a claim that they (Moses and Aaron) would produce the water and not Yahweh. To rehearse the many hypotheses of what exactly Moses' misdeed might have been is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is pertinent to observe that no matter what his particular misdeed is, it is connected with water. The miracle of producing water at Kadesh was orchestrated by Yahweh so that he might be sanctified in the eyes of the Israelites. This is underscored by the closing sentence "These are the waters of

78 The comparison between Egypt and the Promised Land is perhaps most explicit in Num 16:13–14 when Moses is challenged by Dathan and Aviram who ask: "Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness, that you must lord it over us? It is clear that you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, or given us an inheritance of the fields and vineyards."

79 The condemnation of the people as "rebels" (מרה) links Kadesh with the thirst episode of Marah in which one finds the play between "bitter" (מרה) and "rebel" (מרר/מרי).

80 See Martin Noth, *Numbers* (trans. James D. Martin; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 146–47; Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (Philadelphia and New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 164–66 and 448–56; Levine, *Numbers 1–20* (AB 4; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 490.

81 Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, 47.

Meribah, where the Israelites disputed with Yahweh and he was sanctified through them" (וִיִּקְדָּשׁ בָּם) (20:13). The antecedent for "them" is not entirely clear. It could refer to Moses and Aaron, but this is precisely what they failed to do, as v. 12 makes clear. The noun that creates the fewest difficulties is "waters." It is a poetic ending then, if nothing else, that what Moses ultimately fails to do is done simply by water. It is one final piece of evidence that there is a gap between the role of Moses and the role of Yahweh, and that one has powers over water and the other does not. As Kafka remarks: "Not because his life was too short does Moses not reach Canaan, but because it was a human life."⁸²

11. Conclusion

Water threatened Moses' life as an infant, it was what he drew out for his future wife, what he parted in order to save a nation, what he had miraculously provided in the desert, and it was, at least indirectly, the cause of his untimely death and denied entrance to the land of Canaan. In each of these stories water plays an important part, but never one that is exactly the same. The largest divide seems to be the symbolism of water in the stories up to and including the crossing of the Suph-Sea as compared to the passages that deal with water in the wilderness. The representation of water in each pericope mirrors one of water's major characteristics: its constant versatility. By examining how the biblical text links Moses to water then both helps the reader understand him better, but also shows the difficulty of coming to any final analysis.

The wisdom of Proverbs states: "Like water, face to faces; the heart of man to man" (27:19). The line probably refers to the reflective quality of water, and thus could be translated as: "Just as water reflects a face, so does the heart (לֵב) of a man reflect him." So, on the one hand, the proverb suggests that in order to truly know someone, one must know another's לֵב. Yet, beyond the reflective quality of water, the proverb also evokes water's instability. Water is a distorting mirror, and thus what one sees in the לֵב of another might not be a true reflection.⁸³ However, if one tries hard enough, one can, conceivably, glimpse some of the לֵב of another. At least, that is what Prov 20:5 seems to suggest: "The purpose in the לֵב of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." In a way, this paper has been an attempt to draw

82 Franz Kafka, *The Diaries, 1910–1923* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 196.

83 See Robert Alter, *The Wisdom Books: Jobs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 313.

out the לֵב of Moses. But how can one draw out the לֵב of a literary character? Moreover, how can one ever draw out the לֵב of one whose very name means “he who draws out”? Are the waters of Moses’ well too deep? I would tend to think no, but the answer depends on one’s perspective.⁸⁴ For the לֵב that one draws up is always a distorted, incomplete one, like the reflection of a face in water.

84 See Stuart Lasine, *Weighing Hearts: Character, Judgment, and the Ethics of Reading the Bible* (LHBOTS 568; New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 3–55.

Fluvial Fantasies

FRANCIS LANDY

My topic is imaginary rivers, but also rivers in the biblical imagination, rivers that are half real, half imaginary, rivers that divide real from unreal, rivers as a metaphor for the imagination, and thus for poetry. Like poetry, rivers come from a source, which may be remote, inaccessible or intimate; they flow incessantly, ever-changing and always the same; they bring life and are the economic base of inimical empires, and are consequently occasions of death, displacement and anguish, the constitutive trauma of the Hebrew Bible. Israel is not a country of rivers, according to Deut 11:10–11, but dependent on rain and hence divine favour; inconstant celestial waters contrast with reliable riverine economies. Rivers may originate from outside the land of Israel, in Lebanon or Hermon, or from its very centre, in the Temple of Jerusalem, as in Ezek 47:1–12. Rivers are paired with seas as antagonists of God, personifications of resistance to order and creation; for that reason they can be coopted by God as the foundation of the world, as in Ps 24:2, as agents of his will, as loyal servants. Rivers are boundaries, and as such there to be crossed, linking the antinomies wherewith the Bible is constructed. The River of Egypt and the Euphrates demarcate the ideal borders of Israel (Gen 15:18); at the same time, they may constitute an internal boundary, for instance between Trans- and Cisjordan.¹

Fantasies may be wish-fulfilments, driven by pleasure or desire, in the Freudian model;² one may cling to fantasy as an escape from reality, creating a kingdom in the mind when one has lost that in the world. That is a familiar portrait of Israel/Yehud in the late Persian/Hellenistic

1 On the semiotics of the two sides of the Jordan, see David Jobling, "The Jordan a Boundary": Transjordan in Israel's Ideological Geography" in *The Sense of Biblical Narrative II: Structural Analyses of Biblical Narrative* (JSOT Sup 39; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 88–134.

2 For the relationship of fantasy to the pleasure principle, see Sigmund Freud, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (first published in 1911) in *The Pelican Freud Library. Vol.11: On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (trans. James Strachey London: Penguin, 1984), 39–40, as well as his essay "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" in *The Penguin Freud Library. Vol.14: Art and Literature* 131–41 (first published 1908).

period, marked by its proliferation of fantasies, and its invention of a past as an antidote to, or the precondition for, the discommoding present. The biblical narrative, law codes, proverbs and psalms, are resolutely opposed to fantasy: they oppose the true history of the world to the hegemonic metanarratives of empires; the right way of living to wrong ones; the invisible dominion of YHWH to the tangibility and omnipresence of other gods, and the potency of their adherents. Idols and everything that they represent are illusions. But there is also the potentiality for inversion, across the rupture of exile and of symbolic and ideological domains. Truth and power may reside across the river, with the great empires, and Israel's destiny is an illusion. The story is the fantasy, or the fantasy is that there is a story.

By fantasy in this essay I do not refer to a particular literary genre,³ but to the human propensity to create alternative realities and to believe fictions. Rivers may be the object of fantasies, when they participate in stories, or they generate a state of free floating contemplation conducive to fantasy. What I call, provisionally, the fluvial fantasy here is a set of relations between fantasies associated with rivers in the Hebrew Bible, and also a metaphor for the process of poetic and imaginative creation. Rivers are especially important because they are liminal, mediating between the real and the unreal, the self and the other.

The fluvial fantasy may have a particular reference: Israel's ancestors worshipped other gods across the river and God took Abraham from across the river and brought him to the land of Canaan (Josh 24:2–3).⁴ Similarly, Moses literally draws Israel up from the land of the Nile;

3 "Fantasy" refers popularly to a genre of fiction, characterized by the creation of imaginary worlds. There is abundant critical literature on fantasy and the related genre of the "fantastic." However, there have been rather few applications to the Hebrew Bible. See, however, Laura H. Feldt *The Fantastic in Religious Narrative from Exodus to Elisha* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012). Feldt argues that the role of fantasy is to blur central dichotomies, such as those between natural and supernatural, real and unreal, self and other (p. 253). *Semeia* 60 (1992), *Fantasy and the Bible*, was devoted to the Bible and Fantasy, though most of the contributions focused on the New Testament. See also George Aichele and Tina Pippin, eds., *The Monstrous and the Unspeakable: The Bible as Fantastic Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), especially the editors' introduction (11–19).

4 Beate Ego, "Abraham's Faith in the One God – A Motif of the Image of Abraham in Early Jewish Literature" in *Biblical Figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature* (Yearbook 2008) (ed. Hermann Lichtenberger and Ulrike Mittmann-Richert; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 337 argues that this text is germinal for the development of the tradition of Abraham the monotheist in post-canonical literature. See also Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 117, for whom, likewise, it is the first indication in the Hebrew Bible that Abraham's migration was also the adoption of a

the difference between Israel and Egypt, in Deut 11:10–11, is precisely that between the ease of irrigation in Egypt and the ethical requirements of Deuteronomic fertility. The river is the point of origins and of the divergence of Israel and the nations. Primordial worship of other gods, in the text from Joshua, is dwelling across the river. In the story of the Exodus, Israel's path is from infantile dependence to adult responsibility, with its charge of internalized guilt, sense of loss, and nostalgia.⁵ The river separates oneself from the other, life under the divine mandate from preexistence. The river then may represent birth from an undetermined and potentially deadly matrix – other gods, ancestors.

Here the fluvial fantasy is of the matrix as phantasmagoria; instead of a womb which nurtures life it is the realm of other gods and nations under their sway, which according to Deutero-Isaiah (and presumably the Persian period) are like nothing before God. The circumambient nations are empty, their power illusory, and Israel is surrounded and nurtured by ghosts and phantoms. The ancestral heritage carries with it

new deity. Matthias Köckert, "Die Geschichte der Abrahamslieferung" in *Congress Volume 2004* (ed. André Lemaire; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 103–28 (116–17), sees in this a warning to the Diaspora, in a post-Deuteronomic context. Joshua 24 is generally viewed as a Persian era composition, despite the dissenting view of Ed Noort "Zu Stand und Perspektiven: Der Glaube Israels zwischen Religionsgeschichte und Theologie. Der Fall Josua 24" in *Perspectives in the Study of the Old Testament and Judaism: A Symposium in Honour of Adam S. van der Woude on the occasion of his 70th Birthday* (ed. Florentino García Martínez and Ed Noort; VTSup 73; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 82–108. See Thomas Römer, "Israël et son histoire d'après l'historiographie deutéronomiste" *ETR* 61 (1986): 15, and, for a discussion of Noort's thesis, Mladen Popovic, "Conquest of the Land, loss of the land: Where does Joshua 24 belong?" in *The Land of Israel in bible, history and theology. Studies in Honor of Ed Noort* (ed. Cornelis J. de Vos and Jacques van Ruiten; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 87–93. Erhard Blum, "The Literary Connection between the Books of Genesis and Exodus and the end of the Book of Joshua" in *A farewell to the Yahwist? The composition of the Pentateuch in recent European interpretation* (ed. Konrad Schmid and Thomas B. Dozeman; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 89–106 intriguingly suggests that Josh 24:2–3 results from an exegesis of Gen 35:2 (p. 98). Richard Hess, *Joshua* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Nottingham: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 331–332, notes Gen 31:53, in which Laban invokes "the god(s) of Abraham and the god(s) of Nahor" as guarantors of the treaty between him and Jacob; Laban's addition of "the god(s) of their father" would subsume both under the deity/ies of Terah, and suggest, perhaps, that Abraham's true god(s) was/were that/those of his ancestors. As Hess remarks, the concept of deity here is territorial and ancestral. Bernard Gosse, "Abraham, Isaac et Jacob, Moïse et Josué, Elie et Elisée et l'unification du corpus biblique" *EstBib* 58 (2000): 513–26, suggests that the text establishes Joshua in the line of succession stemming from the ancestors and calls on each Israelite to repeat their journey from the worship of other gods to YHWH (p. 523).

- 5 An invaluable study of the Exodus from a psychoanalytic perspective as a narrative of separation from the mother and initiation into the adult world is Ilana Pardes, *The Biography of ancient Israel. National narratives in the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). See Peter Sabo in this volume.

an original taint: "Across the river your fathers dwelt from aforetime, Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they worshipped other gods." Abraham and Nahor: two lineages which represent alternative histories, and which are intertwined in Israel's genealogy. Israel is the heir to a disavowed past, which, like the Freudian repressed, threatens to return with a vengeance.⁶

There is, however, another fantasy associated with rivers, the fantasy of fantasy itself. Rivers symbolize diachrony, flowing from a past to a future, never still, never returning, whatever Qohelet says. They meander through the landscape, time and history. They give the lie to the panoptic glance of the reader of the Bible, to the illusion of synchrony, in which all events can be comprehended, in other words to the Bible's irrepressible intertextuality. Rivers are unpredictable, subject to moods, whims and eddies. In looking at a river, the mind is invited to drift with the current, to lose itself in contemplative awareness. The development of a scribal culture in the Persian/Hellenistic period was conducive to intense reflection on texts as a supreme value, as psalms such as Ps 1 and Ps 119 show. Meditation on the Torah, as in Ps 1:2, suggests repetition, interpretation, pleasure,⁷ and the association of ideas,⁸ in other words, a sensual, imaginative and processual absorption into the text. At the same time, contemplation may be seen as a dangerous distraction: "for the dream comes in the midst of matter" (Qoh 5:2). In that way, the fluvial fantasy is the temptation and promise of fantasy, which interrupts the story with digressions and asides. It is also a figure for the unconscious. One never knows what one will see in the depths, what giant fish lurk there.

The first river in the Bible is the river that came forth from Eden, in an odd geographical parenthesis in between two accounts of God placing Adam into the garden.

And a river came forth from Eden, to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four heads. The name of the first is Pishon; it surrounds the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good, and there is bdellium and onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon, which surrounds the whole land of Cush. And

6 It is notable that the motif of the gods of the ancestors keeps on returning in this text cf. Josh 24:14, 15.

7 The word *הנצח* emphasizes the pleasure in the text, the title of a book by Roland Barthes (Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du Texte*, Paris: du Seuil, 1973).

8 In Midrash, this is the principle of *gezerah shavah*, the equivalence of comparable expressions.

the name of the third river is Hidekel, which flows east of Assyria; and the name of the fourth river is Euphrates. (Gen 2:10–14).

The river comes out from Eden, a location perhaps, as in Amos 1:5 (with whatever intertextual connotations it may be invested)⁹ but also a place of delight (עֵדֶן), and thus associated with wish-fulfilment and fantasy.¹⁰ It waters the garden, which is “in Eden,” part of Eden or maybe adjacent to it, and which is the site of one of the foundational stories in the Bible, that of the first home from which we are forever excluded, and for which we find symbolic substitutes in and as the text. The river waters this garden, infusing it with its vitality, making possible the fantasy of a world without death, effort or lack. The river, in a sense, is the pleasure principle, and as with all marvellous and fabulous rivers, it comes from a source of inexhaustible bounty and goes to strange ends. “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan/ a stately pleasure dome decree/ Where Alph, the sacred river ran/ through caverns measureless to man/ down to a sunless sea.”

The river which waters the garden supplements the enigmatic נָח which moistens the whole face of the ground in v.6, and both prefigure rain that YHWH 'elohim has not yet caused to fall upon the earth in

9 Other instances of this עֵדֶן are 2 Kings 19:12 (= Isa 37:12) and Ezek 27:23. The Masoretic vocalization is slightly different (עֵדֶן as opposed to עֵדֶן). For a possible correlation with Genesis 2–3 see James R. Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination* (SOTSMS; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 47 n. 8, and Francis Landy, “Smith, Derrida, and Amos” in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith* (ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; Sheffield: Equinox, 2008), 223–24. Claus Westermann *Genesis 1–11* (trans. John Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 210, identifies this Eden with Akkadian bit adini, an area on both sides of the Euphrates near Haran.

10 Scholars differ on whether Eden is to be located within the world or outside it. Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden. Genesis 2–3 and symbolism of the Eden garden in biblical Hebrew literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 284–86, argues that it is intermediate between divine and human realms, on the other side of the cosmic ocean (cf. also pp. 299, 474). Trygve N. D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-historical Study of Genesis 2–3* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 15–16, situates it on the mountain of the gods, and thinks it is derived from a previous Adamic myth, found in Ezek 28:14 and v. 16. Similarly, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-creation, Re-creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1–11* (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 61, identifies it with a holy mountain. Arie van der Kooij “The Story of Paradise in the Light of Ancient Mesopotamian Culture and Literature” in *Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms: A Festschrift to Honour Professor John Emerton on his Eightieth Birthday* (ed. Katherine Dell, Graham Davies, and Y. V. Koh; VTSup 135; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 12, compares our text to the Sumerian and Akkadian Flood Story, to suggest that Eden is an island at the mouth of the rivers, like the land of Dilmun.

v.5.¹¹ They are the first of the many stopgaps and improvisations that destabilize the narrative of Gen 2–3. But neither plays any further part in the story—the נָחַם in fact disappears until Job 36:27. The river may be different from the נָחַם, compensating for its insufficiency for the garden, making it redundant, or it may displace it, so that the נָחַם retreats to the fringes of the Biblical protocosmic imagination, whence Elihu will rescue it. In any case, we do not know where they come from. The river may emerge from Eden, but its origin is possibly subterranean (“caverns measureless to man”) and beyond the divine or human purview. It would then come forth on its own volition to water the garden, obedient to no divine program. It may then be an autonomous source of life, connected to a freshwater body of water equivalent to the *tehom* in Gen 1:2. The נָחַם may be the cosmic river, which only emerges at this point.¹²

The river, in any case, collaborates with God and the adam in making and maintaining the garden. It is transformed into the sap of the trees, including the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil. It subtends the ambivalence the garden communicates.

But it also transmits the essence of the garden to the world. All the world’s rivers come from Eden. “From there it was divided and became four heads.” The inset list of the four rivers is likewise extraneous to the narrative, a foretaste of geography outside the garden, enclosed in a textual space that corresponds to that of the world it articulates. The quaternity of rivers notionally suggests the four directions,¹³ diverging from their headwaters in Eden, and a totality encompassing Kush and Havilah in the south and Mesopotamia and beyond in the north-east. As a text within the text, it communicates a vision of humanity united by its dependence on edenic waters, despite the alienation and fragmentation initiated by the story. Like the aetiological note about the

11 Max Roglund, “Interpreting נָחַם in Genesis 2.5–6: Neglected Rabbinic and Intertextual Evidence” *JSOT* 34 (2010): 379–93, argues that נָחַם refers to rain-clouds, and that the verse is inceptive, i.e., there was no rain until the נָחַם arose from the earth. Others consider it to be a subterranean source of water, e.g., Westermann *Genesis 1–11*, 200–201, KBL, 11. Even if it does refer to clouds, there would still be the question of why this very rare word is used, in contrast to more common words like עָנַן, and whether to “water” (וַיַּשְׁקֵהוּ) differs from to “rain.” Gerhard F. Hasel and Michael G. Hasel, “The Hebrew Term ‘ed and its Connection in Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” *ZAW* 112 (2000): 321–40, argue for the traditional rendering of “mist, dew.” See, similarly, Manfred Görg, “Eine heterogene Überlieferung in Gen 2,6?” *BN* 31 (1986): 23–24 and “Noch einmal zu ‘ed (Gen 2,6)” *BN* 50 (1989): 9–10.

12 Stordalen, after a very extensive discussion, suggests that the river constitutes the cosmic ocean once it leaves Eden (*Echoes of Eden*, 299).

13 Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 275.

reconstitution of the original androgyne in sexual union in 2:24, it is a counter-text, which takes us back to the garden.

Two rivers are real, two imaginary.¹⁴ The twinning of the real and the imaginary, the exotic and the familiar, lends credibility to the imaginary, and conversely, makes the real part of a continuum, of which the other end is the legendary, and thus partake of its strangeness. The descriptions of the rivers gradually shorten, until we are left with the bare nomenclature: "and the name of the fourth river is Euphrates." We descend from the arcane to the ordinary, of which nothing needs to be said. And yet the Euphrates is, in the Bible, *the River*, הנהר, the embodiment in our historical world of the primordial river. Moreover, it is associated with what I have called the fluvial fantasy, separating past and present, Israel and the nations, YHWH and the other gods, the real and the unreal. In the immediate context, say in the Persian/Hellenistic era, the two rivers circumscribe Mesopotamia, with its immense mythological resonances, and its responsibility for the destruction of the two kingdoms, as agents and adversaries of YHWH. The Tigris, for instance, which flows "east of Assyria,"¹⁵ may evoke Assyria not only as the conqueror but as a geographical region going back to remote antiquity, with its own narratives of which the latest imperial phase is but an episode (in the Persian period, moreover, an entity which is

14 Not everyone agrees that they are imaginary. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 278, identifies the Pishon with the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, while van der Kooij, "The Story of Paradise," 13, considers the Pishon and the Gihon to be the Ulay and Uqnu rivers, both of which flow from the Iranian highlands. The rivers thus comprise a sequence from east to west. See the detailed arguments of Manfred Dietrich, "Das biblische Paradies und der babylonische Tempelgarten. Überlegungen zur Lage des Garten Eden" in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Beate Ego; Tübingen; Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 302–17. However, Stordalen provides little argument for his suggestion, beyond the fact that these two seas do bound Arabia, and that on the Babylonian world map the Persian Gulf is named the Sea, with the determinative for River. For a skeptical view on the identification of the rivers, and an enumeration of the possibilities that have been mooted, see Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 217–18. Other suggestions for Pishon include the Nile. See Manfred Görg, "Zur Identität des Pischon (Gen 2,11)" *BN* 40 (1987): 11–13. At the other extreme, Yehuda T. Radday, "The Four Rivers of Paradise" *Hebrew Studies* 23 (1984): 23–31, argues that the description is a humorous depiction of a "never-never" land.

15 This phrase has caused some difficulty, since the Tigris flows through Assyria, not to its east (Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 219). Westermann suggests that this may reflect an ancient tradition, going back to before 1300 BCE, when the capital city, Assur, later Nineveh, was located on the west bank of the Tigris. Since the other localities are large and vague regions, not cities, this seems unlikely. It might be a mistake to take the description literally rather than rhetorically. From this point of view, קדמת might convey antiquity and geographic extremity.

already becoming idealized, as an exemplification of human glory and failure, against which to measure current dominions cf. Ahikar, Tobit, Jonah etc).¹⁶ The two rivers, moreover, were home to many Yehudites, who would have had a complex relationship of estrangement and identification with their adoptive land, their ancestral heritage and its scribal heirs. The relationship then is not just with a hegemonic culture and historical trauma, but new and different reading communities.

The first two rivers, Pishon and Gihon, are clearly fictitious.¹⁷ Rivers do not generally encircle countries. Their names do not correspond to any known rivers, at least in those parts, and rhyme suspiciously, Havilah and Kush¹⁸ mark the limits of the world; that they are encircled by rivers ensures that they are separate from the rest of humanity. If rivers signify the division between the real and the fantastic, across the rivers are strange and secluded lands, the stuff of travellers' tales, accessible only with difficulty. Havilah is distinguished by its precious metals, gems, and resins; the extra quality of the gold ("the gold of that land is good") makes the land itself extraordinary. It is a vague, perhaps archaizing, term for Arabia, or a limit term for it; in Gen 25:18, for instance, it marks one of the boundaries of Ishmaelite territory. Arabia throughout the Hebrew Bible is an exotic place.

Kush likewise is paradigmatic of remoteness, one step beyond Egypt, of wealth (e.g. Isa 45:13), of exotic people; in the late Persian/Hellenistic era, it is that land which is just beyond the reach of Empires (hence the fictionalizing effect of the idealized scope of the Persian Empire in Esther). At the same time, in the Table of Nations it is the progenitor of Havilah, among various other Arabian or South Arabian peoples, and of Nimrod, whose power base was the Mesopotamian cities, from among which emerged Assyria (Gen 10:7–11). Kush then

16 See, for example, Ezek 31:2–9 and Isa 23:13.

17 David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 247, identifies the Pishon with a water-source in Jerusalem, probably confusing it with the Gihon; see, however, the suggestion of Tuell noted below. For a full discussion, see Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 278–81. Both names have been seen as derived from roots (גִּיחַ, פִּישׁ) denoting the bubbling, gushing nature of the rivers (Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 217, with references; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 278). Stordalen remarks that "no river fits the description of Gen. 2.11" before identifying the Pishon with the Arabian and Red Sea (p. 279); he thinks that Gihon vaguely designates the rivers of the Upper Nile, corresponding to Isa 18:1–2, 7. Comparably, David Neiman, "Gihon and Pishon" in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (ed. Avigdor Shin'an; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), 325–26, suggests the Gihon is a sea adjacent to Kush.

18 Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 279–80 and Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 218 argue strenuously against the earlier identification of Cush with the land of the Kassites.

stands for the potential for the unification of humanity and of different regions, of a recursiveness whereby the rivers or at least the lands they designate circle round each other, of the imperial fantasy.

The Gihon suggests another interconnection, since it is the name of a spring in Jerusalem, associated with Solomon's anointing and Hezekiah's water works and fortifications.¹⁹ The identification of Zion with the garden of Eden is found in 1 Enoch 25:3–5, and symbolically or prospectively throughout the HB.²⁰ Jerusalem is the source of at least this great river.²¹ Centre and circumference are interlinked and interfuse. If Kush is the enclosed land, which incorporates all others, Jerusalem is the ultimate figure of encompassment. To go back to our initial fluvial fantasy, it is the world empire which renders other empires unreal.

גִּיחוֹן is echoed a little later in the story by גֶּחִין, the belly on which the serpent slides (3:14).²² Snake rivers are quite common, and may be suggested by their meandering course. Here, however, in a narrative that turns on a significant pun,²³ the connection may be subtle and freighted with the full import of the serpent. The serpent communicates the knowledge of good and evil, the ambivalence of the world. In particular, this is through showing that things may be other than they seem, that for instance God has a hidden motive for withholding the fruit of the tree. The woman's eyes are opened to non-present realities, for in-

19 1 Kgs 1:33, 38–39, 45; 2 Chr 32:30; 33:14.

20 Indeed, Steven Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Genesis 2:10–14" in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 171–89, unreservedly identifies Eden with Zion. He spoils his case, however, at least in relation to Ezek 47:1–12, by arguing that Zion has become detached from any terrestrial locale and is a purely heavenly city. On the metaphor of Zion as Eden in general, see Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 409–54.

21 Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise," 179–80, suggests that the Pishon may be identified with a spring west of Zion, corresponding to the Gihon east of it, mentioned in Neh 2:13 as the "Dragon's Spring." He argues that Pishon "may be cognate to *peten* ('serpent')," just as the Gihon is associated with the serpent's belly in Gen 3:14. However, there is no evidence that the Dragon's spring was ever known as the Pishon.

22 Neiman, "Gihon and Pishon," 326–27, also notes this connection, and suggests that both Gihon and Pishon are identified with the primeval serpent. Pishon, in his view, is cognate to Ugaritic *btm*, "sea-serpent." See also Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise," 179.

23 The pun is that between עֶרְוִים, "nude," in Gen 2:25, and עֶרְוֹת, "shrewd," in Gen 3:1. See Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (2d ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 211–21.

stance that the fruit is more than good to eat and lovely to look on, in other words to the imagination.²⁴

Between the river that encircles Kush or the world, like an ouroboros, the sacred spring in Jerusalem, and the serpent's locomotion on its belly, as a sign of malediction, there are evident oppositions and correlations. The river, as I have noted, may be the cosmic river, equivalent to Sea and *tehom*, and thus potentially independent of and antagonistic to God. Similarly, the serpent is one of the forms taken by the Chaos monster, as in Isa 27:1 and Am 9:3, as the Sea's champion against God, or God's instrument against those who seek refuge in the Sea. Serpents, like rivers, are ambivalent, however. Cross-culturally, as in Ancient Israel, they may be sacred.²⁵ The seraphim who surround YHWH's throne in Isa 6:2–8 are not easily distinguishable from the fiery seraphim who afflicted Israel in the wilderness in Num 21:6, as emissaries of God, in Deut 8:15, and as a metaphor for the Davidic king in Isa 14:29, or from Moses's bronze seraph, ambivalence about which is imparted by the report that Hezekiah destroyed it (2 Kgs 18:4).²⁶

The Gihon spring in Jerusalem may likewise represent the cosmic river, like the bronze Sea in Solomon's Temple, and chaos thus as tamed and harnessed for the divine service.²⁷ We do not know, howev-

24 On the many ironies of the story of Genesis 2–3, see Carolyn J. Sharp *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 35–38.

25 Sharp *Irony and Meaning*, 36–37 suggests that the serpent may be the representative of God. There is a vast literature on serpents, both in the garden of Eden and cross-culturally. Note the comments and bibliography of Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation*, 73; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 237–38; Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 221–23. An exhaustive study is James H. Charlesworth *The Good and Evil Serpent. How a Universal Symbol became Christianized* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010). At the same time there is a notable resistance to mythological explanations, for example by Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 237–39, with clear apologetic intent. On this older, theological approach, see Sharp, *Irony and Meaning*, 37.

26 I have written on this in Francis Landy, "Seraphim and Poetic Process" in *The Labour of Reading. Desire, Alienation, and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Fiona C. Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions; Atlanta: SBL, 1999), 15–34.

27 See, for example, Jon Levenson *Sinai and Zion: An Entrance into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Seabury, 1985), 131; Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise," 178. John A. Davies, "Discerning Between Good and Evil: Solomon as a New Adam in I Kings" *Westminster Theological Journal* 73 (2011): 41, sees Solomon's coronation at the Gihon as the first indication in the text of his Adamic role (I owe this reference to our student Lauren Chomyn). Mark Brett, *Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), 35, detects a certain anti-Persian polemic in the reference, with Solomon, as the ideal Israelite king, contrasted with the Persian governor. Lauren Chomyn, in an unpublished essay ("Israel and the Cosmos: Creation and Re-creation in the Story of Solomon" p. 8) writes: "the text associates Solomon both with the wa-

er, what it is doing at Solomon's anointing. It may have to do with Jebus/Jerusalem's indigenous sacrality, as suggested by the obscure phrase *וַיַּגֵּעַ בַּצֹּנָר*, "who touches the water-channel" (2 Sam 5:8)²⁸, in the account of David's conquest. Equally, it contributes to the edenic fantasy associated with Davidic kingship, the king, for instance, as primordial Adam.²⁹

ter that nourishes the sacred city and with the memory of the primeval life-giving waters of Eden."

28 *צֹנָר* only occurs otherwise in Ps 42:8, where it refers to some kind of voluble water course in the divine or sacred realm, probably Zion. In Rabbinic Hebrew, it denotes a water pipe (Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 1291); see also KBL, 1038, contra Serge Frolov and Vladimir Orel, "David in Jerusalem" ZAW 111 (1999): 614, who translate "pivot" and think it refers to the Temple. Gosta W. Ahlstrom, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSup 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 467, argues that the water channel (identified with Warren's Shaft) was the weakest point in Jerusalem's defences. Terence Kleven, "The Water System of Jerusalem and Its Implications for the Historicity of Joab's Conquest" *Near Eastern Archaeological Society Bulletin* 47 (2002): 35–48, rejects the identification with Warren's Shaft, which dates from the 8th c. BCE, but summarizes the evidence for the existence of a pre-conquest water system, going back to the 17th–18th centuries BCE. Because of the difficulty of the phrase, and indeed of the whole passage, numerous alternative explanations have been proposed (e.g., windpipe, penis, neck, arm, trident, doorpost). For a full discussion, see P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB 9; Doubleday: New York, 1984), 137–39, who favours "windpipe," and Philippe Hugo, "L'Archéologie Textuelle du Temple de Jerusalem: Étude Textuelle et Littéraire du Motif Théologique du Temple en 2 Samuel" in *Archaeology of the Books of Samuel: The Entangling of the Textual and Literary History* (ed. Philippe Hugo and Adrian Schenker; VTSup 132; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 166–67. Jan P. Fokkelman *Narrative Art and Poetry in the books of Samuel: Volume III: Throne and City* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 161, attractively thinks that the waterpipe is metaphorically a windpipe. John Van Seters *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 215–16, is characteristically sceptical about the entire reconstruction. Craig W. Tyson, "Who's In? Who's Out? II Sam 5b and Narrative Reversal" ZAW 122 (2010): 550 n. 15, argues that *יָגַעַ* means to "strike" at the water-supply. I think that there is a relation between 2 Sam 5:8 and Isa 33:21–23, in which the motif of Jerusalem as the source of cosmic rivers is combined with that of the lame (see Willem A. M. Beuken *Isaiah II. Vol. 2/Isaiah 28–39* [trans. Brian Doyle; Leuven: Peeters, 2000], 276, with references). In Ps 42:8, the sound of the *צֹנָר* is somehow attuned to that of the *tehomot*, which reinforces the suggestion that the *צֹנָר* is connected to the primeval ocean. If, as most assume, the water pipe channels the waters of the Gihon, then by touching it or striking at it, the subject of David's speech in 2 Sam 5:8 is laying claim to the source of Jerusalem/Jebus's vitality.

29 See Davies, "Discerning Between Good and Evil," 440–44. Joel Rosenberg, *King and Kin: Political Allegory in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), regards the Garden of Eden story as a reflection on the aspirations and flaws of the Davidic dynasty; he argues that "the ideology of kingship ... is closely bound up with the mythology of paradise, garden, temple, and sacred enclave" (p. 193). Victor Hurowitz, "YHWH's Exalted House – Aspects of the Design and Symbolism of Solomon's Temple" in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* (ed. John Day; LHBOTS

There might also be ambivalence attached to the whole scene, given the machinations accompanying Solomon's accession, and the ambiguities attached to his rule. Then the spring would represent the irony of history, and of Solomon's glory, at least from the perspective of the historian, amid the unfolding ironies of the narrative. Solomon is at once the world ruler, as projected by Psalm 72, and Temple builder, seduced by other gods, and by his wisdom which turns to folly.

The figure of Solomon, at least in the Persian/Hellenistic period, increasingly becomes paradigmatic of the entire human potential for good and evil, wisdom and folly, the grandeur and absurdity of human beings.³⁰ That, symbolically, the serpent should be present at the beginning of his reign is evidence that the ritual of inauguration, performatively staged by Sadok and Nathan as a demonstration of divine election and sustenance by the waters of life, is a reenactment of the primordial enigma. The choice will be presented again in the narrative of Solomon's dream in ch.3, with similar ambiguity.³¹

The cursed, stomach-crawling serpent is antithetic to the sacred, flying serpent and the sea-serpent. Its posture renders it abject, subjugated under divine and human feet, just as its diet reduces it to dirt. But this is also the substance of the adam, to which he/she returns in death (Gen 3:19). The serpent consumes mortality, and twists between mortality and immortality. However abjected, it does not die, and remains as a threat to humanity—and to God? (3:15).³²

גחון occurs once elsewhere in the Bible, in Lev 11:42, as part of a list of characteristics of all the creepy-crawly, or multi-legged, creatures

422; London: T & T Clark, 2007), 82–84, 87–88, illustrates garden of Eden imagery in the Temple.

30 Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 403–7, argues that Qohelet, with its Solomonic protagonist, is an allegory of the Garden of Eden, and notes that Adam is constantly associated with rulers. For irony in the representation of the Solomonic persona in Qohelet, see Sharp, *Irony and Meaning*, 200–203. Similarly, I have argued, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 172–262, that the Song of Songs is a reenactment of the story of the Garden of Eden, with Solomon as an Adamic figure.

31 Steven Weitzman, *Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011), 25–29, intriguingly suggests that Solomon's dream in 1 Kings 3:4–15 is a palimpsest concealing the story of the Garden of Eden, which, he says, is also a palimpsest.

32 On the polyvalence of the serpent, reinforced by numerous ambiguities, in Gen 3:15b see Karolien Vermeulen, "Eeny Meeny Miny Moe: Who is the Craftiest to Go?," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10 (2010) article 14, available online at www.jhsonline.org and republished under the same title in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures VII* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 15; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2011), 429–42. For the persistence of evil, embodied in serpentine sea-monsters, see Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 15–49.

who are to be abominated. The world is articulated into the categories of pure and impure, edible and inedible. Consuming snakes will contaminate your soul (Lev 11:43).³³ The Massoretes distinguished this word as containing the middle letter of the Torah.³⁴ Right in the middle of the Torah is the impure, and the terrifying proliferation of existence; right at the beginning is the primal choice. A deconstructionist would surely find it intriguing—as did that protological deconstructionist medieval mystic, Abraham Abulafia.³⁵

The serpent is aligned with the tree and the river as presenting the choices and bifurcations of life, and as metaphors for each other – indeed as metaphors for metaphor, and for the processes of metamorphosis which constitute the fluvial fantasy itself.

The river flows on for ever, and there are many rivers in the Bible, rivers of death, like the Nile or the Jordan in the Shibboleth story, allegorical rivers, such as the river of righteousness and justice in Amos 5:24, deceptive rivers, as in 2 Kgs 3. In the remainder of this paper I would like to look very briefly at another example from biblical narrative, and then turn to the Psalms, in which rivers become metaphors for mystical or poetic experience.

The next major episode concerning a river in the Bible is Pharaoh's dream in Gen 41. As a dream image, the river invites interpretation, which Joseph provides. It is clearly an image of time, since the cows that arise from it are years. One imagines Pharaoh dreaming, contemplating the river, as he must constantly do, the source of life and prosperity for his country, and of its continuity with the ancient past. The river is also the dream from which the images arise; it may represent the unconscious, since it tells Pharaoh of that which he does not know,

33 Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 684, translates נִשְׁכַּח as “throat,” which seems needlessly restrictive, since it is clearly the entire person who is contaminated.

34 B. Qiddushin 30a; Soferim 9.2. The letter in question is the *waw*, which is accordingly elongated.

35 For a brief account of Abulafia's mysticism and philosophy of language and Torah, see Moshe Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (trans. Jonathan Chipman; Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1988) and idem, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia* (trans. Menahem Kallus; Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), and Elliot Wolfson, *Abraham Abulafia: Kabbalist and Prophet. Hermeneutics, Theosophy, and Theurgy* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2000). The particular reference is to Abulafia's *Perush 'al Sefer Yetsirah* (ed. Israel Weinstock (1984), in which the נהן of the serpent symbolizes primordial matter, and hence is at the centre of the Torah. On serpent symbolism in Abulafia in general, as well as in the *Perush 'al Sefer Yetsirah* in particular, see Robert Sagerman, *The Serpent Kills or the Serpent Gives Life. Abraham Abulafia's Response to Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 257–65.

and in particular that he is not master of his own house and country.³⁶ But most important, it transports him to another dream, inserts him into a different story—that of God and Joseph.³⁷ Hence the dream changes as it is told, when it becomes Joseph's dream and then ours, and when Pharaoh hears from Joseph that only God or the gods have the answer, and that his power and wisdom are illusory.

In poetry, rivers not surprisingly are symbols or metaphors for poetic experience, and in the case of mystical poems, of mystical experience. A case in point is Ps 93, often twinned, and opposed to, Ps 92:

YHWH reigns; in pride he has robed himself, robed himself has YHWH in power he has girded himself;³⁸ indeed he has established the world, it does not totter. Firm is your throne from aforetime; from eternity you are.

Rivers have lifted up, O YHWH, rivers have lifted up their voice, rivers have lifted up their crashing. From the voices of many waters, majestic ones, breakers of the sea, majestic on high is YHWH.

Your testimonies are very faithful; in your house, lovely in holiness, O YHWH, for the length of days.

The poem has a tripartite structure, moving from the transcendent to the immanent, from YHWH to the waters and thence to the house and

36 Steven Weitzman, *Solomon*, 20–32, discusses the possibility of psychoanalytic interpretation at length, and provides an interesting analysis of Solomon's dream (1 Kings 3:4–15). Barbara Green, "The Determination of Pharaoh" in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives* (ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 257; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 155–56 n. 9, comments on Sternberg's note (*Poetics of Biblical Narrative* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986], 395) that in ancient times dreams represented external rather than internal impulses that this does not exclude other aspects, such as depth psychological ones. She makes the interesting observation that Pharaoh is "dreamworthy" (p. 156), that it is a mark of respect. I imagine Pharaoh standing, choreographically, by the shore of the Nile, perhaps ceremonially; the scene evokes the subsequent one when Moses encounters Pharaoh by the Nile before the plague of blood (Exod 7:15). Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 397, wonders why the cows are specified as coming from the Nile, but not the ears of wheat, which might be expected. The cow is the symbol of the goddess Hathor, who symbolized the joy and fertility brought by the Nile.

37 Several scholars note that in the retelling the dream becomes Joseph's dream. Avivah Zornberg, *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1995), 284–88, suggests that it prefigures Joseph's own period of prosperity, followed by his existential crisis on the reappearance of his brothers. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 394–400, masterly analyses the distortions in Pharaoh's recounting of his dream, and the corrections introduced by Joseph.

38 In my translation I have tried to capture the syntactical ambiguities of the Hebrew, for example, that *וַיִּגְדֹּל*, "power," may be the object of both "robed himself" and "girded himself."

the human realm.³⁹ The rivers/seas are outside the intimate space of that house and the solidity of the divinely established world and throne. One goes from the outside to the inner space, constituted of loveliness and holiness, to the experience of the house as the place of the presence of God, for the length of days, contrasting an infinity of human time to the timelessness of God.

Rivers here are evidently cosmic rivers, as evidenced by the plural, the lack of the definite article, and the two word parallelisms reminiscent of the Song of the Sea, psalms about the cosmic battle like Pss 74 and 89, and Ugaritic epic, as well as v.10 in the previous psalm ("For behold your enemies, O YHWH, for behold your enemies shall perish, all who do evil will be scattered"). The repeated phrases suggest the repeated surge of the waters, reaching a climax, and their sound; I have translated "voice," to intimate that they are animated. The association with the cosmogonic battle,⁴⁰ and its correlate in the noisy confedera-

39 Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 484, think that, on balance, v. 5 is a secondary addition. This does not affect, however, the poetic unity of the psalm. Herbert J. Levine, *Sing Unto God a New Song: A Contemporary Reading of the Psalms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 140, describes the "indivisible and enduring unity of earth, sea, and heaven" in the psalm. Similarly, Nahum M. Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms: Exploring the Prayers of Ancient Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1993), 187, comments that, despite the appearance of discontinuity, "the thought flows naturally from the first two verses." See also Bernd Janowski, "Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen" *ZTK* 86 (1989): 116–17, who sees v. 5 as the key to the psalm. As is their wont, scholars differ on the structure of the poem. Whereas the tripartite structure is the most common, others divide the poem into two strophes (vv. 1–2, 3–5), based on metre, or else vv. 1, 2–5.

40 The association with the cosmogonic battle is commonplace, cf. for example, John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 35–37; Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (CBQMS 26; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 161. In an influential discussion, Jörg Jeremias, *Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen. Israels Begegnung mit dem kanaanäischen Mythos in den Jahwe-König-Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1987), 15–29, argues for the transformation of the theme, since God's supremacy has never been threatened. Sea, for instance, is not a rival deity, as in the Ugaritic myth. Thomas Krüger, "'Kosmo-theologie' zwischen Mythos und Erfahrung" *BN* 68 (1993): 70–71, sees Psalm 93 as comprising a foundational myth for the Jerusalem Temple. In a recent article, Dennis Sylva, "The Rising נָהַר of Psalm 93: Chaotic Order" *JSOT* 36 (2012): 471–82, argues that there is no cosmogonic battle in the psalm, but that, on the contrary, YHWH is clothed in the garb of a sea-god. From being an antagonist, the sea is transformed into a sign of God's power. However, Sylva does not provide convincing evidence that the rivers are the divine vestments in v. 1, or that YHWH inhabits the depths. Stephen Geller, "Myth and Syntax in Psalm 93" in *Mishneh Todah: Studies in Deuteronomy and its Cultural Environment in Honor of Jeffrey H. Tigay* (ed. Nili Sacher Fox, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Ei-

tion of maritime nations against YHWH and his anointed (e.g., Pss 2, 48), would lead us to expect that the object of all this uproar is YHWH; the rivers are lifting up their voices in rage. But YHWH is undisturbed by this violence, on his throne at the apex of his immovable world; the poet reports it ("Rivers have lifted up, O Lord") as an insurrection in his own mind or imagination to an addressee who, at least for the moment, does not experience or engage with it. That it follows "from eternity you are" and is succeeded by the second person references to "your testimonies" and the final invocation of YHWH's perpetual presence in his house ("O YHWH, for the length of days") ensures that it is part of a litany of praise, a reminder and repetition of God's primordial triumph. Hence the warrior imagery of the first section of the poem, with its alliterative sequence *עז, התאזר, ומוזר*, YHWH's girding himself in power—a typical phallic investiture—correlated with constancy. However, what is important, and where I would like to end, is the next line, in which the River becomes, or is displaced by, the Sea, the triple repetition of the parallelism turns into a single protracted line,⁴¹ intimating the gradual building of strength of the wave to its climax ("From the voices of many waters, majestic ones, breakers of the sea"), and then is transmuted into the stillness of God's majesty and transcendence: "majestic on high is YHWH." So the confused hubbub of the sea ("From the voices of many waters") becomes the praise, or the source of strength, of God.

In Psalm 42, rivers are a metaphor for God. "As a hart longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God [...]" (vv. 2–3a).⁴² The simile of the hart longing for streams of water evokes a scene of pastoral destitution alongside one of the fulfillment of desire; one can imagine the streams surrounded by pasture, as well as the deer drinking. It sets the stage for the dia-

senbrauns, 2009), 330, suggests that the Psalm combines the combat myth with its supersession by the Sea's acclaim of God. This accords with my translation of the particle *min* in 4a as "from" rather than the more usual comparative "than." Peter L. Trudinger, "Friend or Foe? Earth, Sea, and *Chaoskampf* in the Psalms" in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and Prophets* (ed. Norman C. Habel; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 39, likewise thinks that the water-beings offer homage to YHWH: "the movement of the waves mimic people raising arms then falling prostrate before YHWH..."

41 V.4 is generally regarded as a tricolon, with *אזריים* attributed to the second colon. In contrast, I see it as an adjective modifying *מים רבים* ("many waters, majestic ones") and in apposition to *משברי ים*, "breakers the sea," to produce a single protracted line.

42 Technically, the first line is a simile, but it is decoded as a metaphor in the second. Luis Alonso-Schökel, "The Poetic Structure of Psalm 42–43" *JSOT* 1 (1976): 5, notes that this is the only psalm that begins with a simile, and that it somewhat softens the impact of the image.

lectic of alienation and conjunction as the twin poles between which the poem moves. The soul⁴³ thirsts for God; the transfer from vehicle to tenor works also in reverse, since the divine realm is thereby characterized as well-watered and unfailing, in contrast to the surrounding desolation. Implicitly, God is to the soul what water is to the body. The intensity of the desire is emphasized by the addition of *לֹאֵל ה'*, "for the living God," suggesting both that God is the only god who is living, and that it is his vitality that is sought. The soul desires to drink in and receive life from God, just as the body does from living, flowing water.

The connection between the psalmist and God is communicated also on the phonemic level. *אֵל*, "hart," leads to *אֵלֶיךָ*, "to you," and thence to *אֱלֹהִים* and *אֵל*, both synonyms for "God." Between *אֵל* and *אֵל* there is barely any phonemic difference. The hart comes to drink of the spring; it, and the God the spring represents, becomes indistinguishable, at least sonorously.

The implication of fusion between the psalmist and God is transferred to a different metaphorical and ritual plane in the following phrase: "When will I come and be seen by the face of God" (v.3b). The psalmist comes to see the face or presence of God, whether or not it is invisible, and in turn is seen by it. There is thus a community of the gaze: one sees and is seen at the same time, and what one sees is that one is seen.

The communion between the divine and the human, and the desire for God as the source of life, are characteristic of mystical poetry. The streams for which the hart longs suggest a flow from God to the worshipper, that God indeed is not a separate or transcendent being or source, but the flow itself, from which the poet imbibes and obtains life, and which becomes immanent in him.

The poem continues with variations of the water imagery, and permutations of the phonemic cluster, both of which express the tension between the desired intimacy and the experienced distance and alienation. The streams are followed by tears (v. 4), the soul pouring out on itself (v. 5), the Jordan (v. 7), the abysses, channels, breakers and waves (v. 8). The convergence of *אֵל*, "hart," and *אֵל*, "God," is reconfig-

43 With the conventional translation "soul" I do not imply any strict dualism of soul and body; it could perhaps be rendered "psyche" or "anima." Of course, one should avoid essentialist constructions of the distinction between "dualism" and "monism." Texts such as Gen 9:4 and Lev 17:11 make it clear that *נֶפֶשׁ* and *בָּשָׂר* are different, if interrelated, entities. There is abundant evidence from cognitive science that the difference between mind and body is a human, and probably inter-species, universal. See Edward Slingerland, "Body and Mind in Early China: An Integrated Humanities-Science Approach," *JAAAR* 81 (2013): 6–55, esp. 30–32.

ured as the felt absence of *איה אלהיך*, “Where is your God,” in v. 4, and the consolatory attempt at memory of *אלה אזכרה*, “These things I will remember,” in v. 5.

In Psalm 87, in a replay of Eden, all the world’s people are born in Zion. I will, however, turn to the last verse: “And singers like dancers, all my springs are in you” (v.7). Hossfeld and Zenger⁴⁴ attribute the latter part of the verse to the nations; however, it could equally well be the poet speaking, as in v.3. In that case, the springs are the source of the poet’s life and his words; the singers and the dancers perhaps emanate from his speech and circle round the spring, and they may represent the nations.⁴⁵ The poet’s springs, however, are in Zion, and correlated with the springs of Zion, particularly the Gihon. This would correspond to the edenic imagery throughout the Psalm, in which Zion is the centre of the world, from which the nations near and far, including Kush, derive their life. Then the edenic rivers, real and imaginary, are the source of poetic inspiration and of the language, fantastic, circuitous, and prosaic, that describes our journey from that primordial home.

Rivers are usually joyful, promising abundance and fertility, but they may also be scenes of lament. This is clearly so in Psalm 137: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept...” The rivers are the end of the journey into exile, and should thus portend relief; instead they become the occasion for reflection on all that has been lost. The rivers signify the power and the economic base of the adversary; we revisit the pastoral scene, by the rivers of Eden, but only through the plangency of the deportees. Eden is no longer home.

My final example is Job 28:11: “From the weeping of rivers he binds up;⁴⁶ and from profound darkness/the secret things he brings forth

44 Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 385.

45 It might be contextualized in the water-festival of Sukkot. At least in late Second Temple times Sukkot was celebrated with songs and dances during the water-festival (M.Sukkah 5.1–4), and also symbolically associated with the seventy nations of the world, as represented by the 70 sacrificial bulls offered up during its course (b.Sukkah 55b).

46 David J. A. Clines, *Job* 21–37 (WBC 18A; Waco, Tex.: Word, 2006), 900 derives *מבכי* from “a new noun *מבך*, ‘source of water, fountain’,” on the grounds that *בכי*, “weeping,” is never used metaphorically. However, Job is replete with original metaphors. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 190, notes that Job has the highest concentration of “innovative imagery” in the Hebrew Bible, which is “a reflection of the poet’s particular genius and his extraordinary ability to imagine disconcerting realities.” Clines also reads *חבש*, “bind up,” as *חבש*, “seek,” as a variant of the more usual *חפש*. Clines does not recognize the overall allegorical dimension of the passage concerning the miner in 28:1–11, and in particular the heal-

light." The context is the work of the miner who delves into the depths of the mountains as a figure for wisdom. Here the underground source of the rivers (נהרות) is described as weeping (בכי), suggestive of lamentation as inextricable from life, fully in accord with the insistence of Job up to this point, which I consider the turning point of the book.

It may also be a metaphor for the text, and tale, of the Bible, which begins with such hope, and ends in such loss, and of our own indefatigable efforts to extract light from it. One can easily lose one's way, as the rivers twist and circle round each other. The image of the miner can be matched with that of the friends in 6:15–18, who are either frozen in their inability to respond to Job's plight, or disappear in the desert wastes, their human sympathy vanishing in the face of Job's extremity and the exhaustion of received wisdom. At the other end of Job, there is the Behemoth, whose habitat includes the River, identified with the Jordan, and whose nostrils, just visible above the surface, testify to his submerged life (40:23). Here the River, with its chaotic intimations, is a matrix, in which the archetypal beast feels at home.

In Psalm 137, the rivers, emblematic of imperial triumph, evoke a song of nostalgia, bereavement and revenge, ending on precisely the opposite topographic image, that of the sharp dry rock on which the children are shattered. The song, however, is a song one cannot sing, a song of Zion about the songs of Zion that we cannot sing. It is a song about the absence of song.

So too with the rivers of Eden, the land across the river, the rivers from which dreams rise and into which they fall back. The rivers of Eden make their way into the Davidic fantasy, with its ambiguous promise of good and evil; the ancestors across the river lay claim to us, even as we disown them; Pharaoh, like all people, watches the fat cows and ears of corn eaten by the thin ones, watches life swallowed by death.

ing function of the figure of wisdom. Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 177, in a chapter on allegory in Job 28, writes: "(Job) is tunneling, overturning obstacles, sinking shafts in the search for something that is not only more precious than gold but beyond all other values." It should be noted in vv. 10–11 that נהרות, "Niles," is coupled with נהרות, "Rivers." These are no ordinary underground torrents, but world rivers. In typical Job fashion, נהרות in v. 10 alliterates with אור, "light," in v. 11.

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